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A
SECOND ARGUMENT
IN DEFENCE OF
CHRISTIANITY,
TAKEN FROM
THE ANCIENT PROPHECIES,
APPLIED TO
THE MOST REMARKABLE EVENTS
IN THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
JESUS CHRIST.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF
PROPHECY. REV. xix. 10.

By the AUTHOR of AN ARGUMENT taken from
the Concessions of the most ancient Adversaries.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. NEWBERRY, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.
MDCCLXII.

TO THE
 RIGHT HONORABLE
 ANTHONY



the Subject of the
 Example You have

TO THE
RIGHT HONORABLE
ANTHONY
EARL OF SHAFTESBURY,

BARON ASHLEY OF WIMBORNE ST.
GILES, BARON COOPER OF PAULET,
LORD LIEUTENANT AND CUSTOS
ROTULORUM OF THE COUNTY OF
DORSET, AND ONE OF HIS MA-
JESTY'S MOST HONORABLE PRIVY
COUNCIL.

MY LORD;

THE just Attention Your Lord-
ship hath constantly shewn to
the Subject of these Papers, and the
Example You have always set to those
of

DEDICATION.

of your own exalted Rank, and consequently to every one of an inferior Order, of the most disinterested Probity, and every other Christian Virtue, public or private, will excuse me, both to Your Lordship and the World, for the Liberty I have taken in addressing Your Lordship on this Occasion.

Homage to the Tyrannical and unworthy is generally paid with Reluctance and Regret; sometimes with Indignation: and an uncivil reception is apt to excite in the Weak, Timidity and Meanness; in the Bold, Disgust and Resentment.

In such incidents the use and efficacy of Example seem to be lost above; the Tyes of Reverence and Affection dissolved below.

Talents

DEDICATION.

Talents are the Gift of God ; and Learning may be acquired in the Schools : but Urbanity in perfection is to be found only among the well-born and well-bred.

The Diamond in its native Crust is not to be distinguished from any other Pebble : Form, Fashion and Lustre, are bestowed upon it afterwards.

It is with pleasure, therefore, that I make my Approaches to Your Lordship, with these Papers in my hand : They will be accepted with Candor and Humanity, I am certain ; and, if they deserve it, with Approbation.

With a safe Conscience I can, however, assure Your Lordship, that they

DEDICATION.

had their Origin from a Desire to be
useful rather than to be eminent.

Notwithstanding the multitude of
Tracts, which Ambiguity, Scepticism
and Controversy have given rise to,
I thought there was an Opening left
for this: and if there is any, the least,
Merit in the Purpose, I must beg Your
Lordship's Leave to plead it, in ex-
tenuation of any defect in the Per-
formance.

But whatever reception it may meet
with from others, I own I am proud
of the opportunity it gives me of de-
claring the grateful Sense I have of the
many Favors Your Lordship hath been
pleased to confer upon me: And, at
the same time, to shew my Regard for
the Public as well as for Your Lord-
ship's

DEDICATION.

ship's Family, That the Heir to your Honors and Fortune may also inherit all the Virtues of his Parents, is the constant Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most obliged,

most faithful, and

most humble Servant,

GREGORY SHARPE

DEDICATION

My dear friends, I have the honor to
acknowledge the receipt of your
kind letter of the 10th inst.

and in reply to inform you

that I have

the pleasure to accept of your

very kind offer of the book

which you have so graciously

placed at my disposal, and

which I have the honor to

acknowledge with much

gratitude, and which I

shall be happy to place

in the hands of the

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INTRODUCTION.

MAN is religious, social and reasonable: other animals may associate and reason; man alone is religious. The Creator has honored the human race with the glorious privilege of contemplating him and his works, and it is scarcely to be imagined that he does not design the human mind to have a more perfect knowledge in a future state of those great objects, God and nature, which man is led with so much solicitude to enquire after, and of which he can obtain only a very inadequate and imperfect knowledge in this state.

The mind arrives not at its full perfection in this world. Man is capable of immortality; but the noblest faculties of his immortal part are by few cultivated.

INTRODUCTION.

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The mind arrives not at its full perfection in this world. Man is capable of immortality ; but the noblest faculties of his immortal part are by few cultivated

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tivated as they ought, by none improved or exerted so as not to be still capable of greater improvements and productions. All the wisdom of mankind throughout every age of the world is, in all probability, very far short of what the mind of one man, in a state of progression, might discover.

The hope and expectation of another life after this is so universal, and so strongly impressed upon the human mind, that it is unnatural and unreasonable to deny it.

If the mind of man is to perish with his body, immortality would no more have been an object of expectation to his mind than to that of other animals.

The elephant, the horse, the lion, have no desires, no views, no apprehensions, of other planets, or other parts of this far remote from those they inhabit; and if they had, it is not

to

INTRODUCTION. vii

to be doubted but they would be furnished with the means of going to them.

The heart of man, and his history and association, prove the truth and reasonableness and necessity of religion. Our hopes and fears, our natural conscience, founded on the essential difference there is between good and evil, right and wrong; the power we have of acting with or against truth and reason, and the acknowledged certainty that we are accountable for our conduct, though a very small share is accounted for in this brief state of trial, are strong arguments for a future state of rectification and retribution.

If the universal consent of the human heart is not sufficient to prove man a religious being, the necessity of religion to society must be admitted; and no man in his senses will deny, that man is a social being. Society cannot sub-

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sist without laws, nor laws obtain their full effect without religion.

The sufferings of men prove the present life to be a state of DISCIPLINE, and DISCIPLINE infers PROBATION; for men are proved by the exercise of patience and every other virtue; and a state of PROBATION necessarily infers a future state of RETRIBUTION.

In this world FOLLY, VICE and MISERY prevail: in the next, therefore, we may reasonably expect WISDOM, VIRTUE, HAPPINESS.

The history of man is an evidence of his future expectations, and the general verdict of the species ought to prevail against the assertions of the few, who have no proof for what they assert, can at most doubt, and perhaps never absolutely divest the mind either of its apprehensions or expectation of a life to come.

Whence is it that we read of altars, consecrated groves and high places, from the beginning of the world, and
still

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still see the earth covered with mosques and temples and religious edifices, if religion is not necessarily connected with human nature? To say with some who boast themselves philosophers, that God is, but is not good, or that providence is, but is not just, and that men are to be governed by a religion that has no sanctions, by a Deity who will neither protect nor punish equally, and who has given men a capacity to discover and discourse of him and his works, but to no other purpose than to confound and frighten them, is absurd and contradictory.

If the diversity of opinions that have arisen in the world concerning God and his worship, is objected, the most that can be made of such an objection is, that we should wish that God would be pleased to assist our natural reason with revelation. It is certainly true, that where revelation has not been admitted, men have become idolaters,

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idolaters, and idolatry has generally produced human sacrifices. This therefore should incline all men to hope, and to wish, that God may have communicated, by some extraordinary means, what may be sufficient to preserve men in the true worship of him, and the due observance of his laws.

Whether any such revelation has been given, must be determined by evidence, the evidence of facts supported by history and prophecy.

The history of the Jewish Scriptures, which commences with the world, is connected with prophecy, and proved by it. The history of the Christian Scriptures is demonstrated by the Jewish, being a series of events which are no other than the accomplishments of ancient prophecies.

In a former essay, containing an Argument in defence of Christianity, taken from the concessions of its most ancient adversaries, Jews and Pagans, Philosophers

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Philosophers and Historians, the history of Jesus Christ, and the works and writings of his disciples were proved. The cause of Christianity is there tried ex parte : it is submitted to a determination upon the evidence of the adversary only, whose concessions are sufficient to ascertain the facts in the Gospel.

This is human evidence ; the argument in the following chapters is divine. The same facts that were before proved from history, are here shewn to be accomplishments of ancient prophecies.

Not every prophecy in the Old, nor every event in the New Scriptures, is taken into consideration : this would be to transcribe them both. The most remarkable events only are insisted upon, such as the time of Christ's appearing, his birth, his office, his forerunner, his character, life and death, and burial, and resurrection from the dead,

with

xii INTRODUCTION.

with the consequences of this his victory over sin and death, to himself and all who believe in him, and the great effusion of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples on the day of Pentecost; after which event the oracles delivered by them bear sufficient testimony in favor of all they relate.

If these most important facts are shewn to have been foretold by the prophets, the argument from prophecy must be allowed to be conclusive.

Let the adversary suppose what he will, with regard to these ancient records: let them have suffered as many alterations and additions as he pleases to suggest, it cannot be denied, that the oracles produced in the following pages subsisted long before the events supposed to be confirmed by them.

In the prosecution of this argument, the author has not presumed to alter the original text. His translation is as literal as possible, and always conform-
able

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able to the rules of the language he translates from: All is plain, simple, natural; no double senses, no double accomplishments, no accommodations are contended for; nothing is left uninterpreted or unaccounted for. The adversary's challenge is accepted of, upon his own terms. The author pretends to as much freedom in thinking as any who have boasted of that quality; and is a Christian, because he thinks the evidence produced for Christianity unanswerable. He has neither learning nor ingenuity enough to discover any fallacy in the proof he has offered.

He has no cause to serve but that of truth. He has no scheme, no system to support. He begs only to be read, and hopes the goodness and sincerity of his intentions will procure him pardon for any errors he may have committed. He opposes no advocate for Christianity, but addresses himself particularly to such as have supposed the evidence of
it

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it not so demonstrable as it appears to him. He has nothing to say to the writings of Mr. Anthony Collins, because he did not understand the argument from prophecy; what is serious in him, is taken from Grotius, whose opinions are candidly discussed in this book; the rest, in which he draws his conclusions from the weak concessions of Surinhusius, and Whiston, is all banter, which seems to have been his only talent.

If the trifling productions of modern infidels, who have never read the Jewish books, nor understand their language or history, are neglected, the arguments and objections of the Rabbins, and particularly of the author of Nizzachon, are here examined and refuted.

If the author has in some few instances presumed to differ from the most learned Pocock, he thinks himself obliged to declare it as his opinion, that

INTRODUCTION. xv

the commentaries of that truly venerable author often lead to the discovery of truth, and never can be read without the reader's improvement.

The liberty, the licentiousness rather, Pere Houbigant has taken with the text may sometimes have provoked the author to reprehend him for it: in this, however, he hopes he has not exceeded the bounds of decency and good manners, and is very ready to acknowledge the just merit of that learned Father of the Oratory, as a most useful commentator.

Before he concludes this address to his reader, he takes leave to recommend to his perusal a late performance upon the subject of the VIth chapter in these papers, the Evidence of John the Baptist, by the ingenious Mr. Bell, a work, that for candor, modesty, and good sense, well deserves the public attention.

INTRODUCTION

THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
GENERAL LAND OFFICE
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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C H A P. I.

OF THE PROPHETS.

WHATEVER may have been said by some hardy moderns against miracles and prophecies, it is certain, that, in former times, they were thought so necessary for the directing, warning, and reclaiming mankind, that the heathens, no less than the people of God, pretended to derive, from a spiritual communication with their divinities, a power to foretell future events: nor is it possible to account for the origin of Man, without miracle and prophesy; Creation is a proof of the first, and the knowlege necessary

B

to

to have been communicated to the human race, before they could have acquired it from experience, is a proof of the latter. How long a visible correspondence by the means of ministering angels, or subordinate agents, or of one great Being superior to men and angels, might have subsisted between the Creator and an infant world, can be known only by revelation; the evidence for which will appear incontestable to us, if it can be supported through many, I might say, through all ages, by the continual accomplishment of the prophecies it contains.

From a real appearance of the glory or majesty of God by his messengers, to his people, or to them who had not alienated themselves from him, and denied his power and presence, by falling down before their Baalim, and worshiping the hosts of heaven instead of the God of Hosts, pretended appearances

appearances became in fashion among the Heathens, and the most abominable representations of divine powers were invented, to support the most idolatrous practices and frauds, and wickedness and murder. In like manner, from the real gift of prophesy conferred on those who were separated for that purpose, the Pagan priests in every place pretended to the same powers and privileges. But then, not only the ceremonies, sacrifices, preparations, poets, priests and priestesses, were necessary to give a venerable air to the imposture, but secret caverns, noise and distortions of the possessed were super-added, to make invention pass for truth and reality.

So it is, however, that in this case as in most others, artifice betrays itself: there could be no consistence where there was no integrity.....And thus the cheats of one period were exposed by the experience of the next.

Whereas, with the oracles of God, it was far otherwise : He who is the same through all generations could never be irreconcilable with himself: and thus prophecy, under his direction, becomes history : and what is transacted is but a bare display of what was foretold.

God's word, moreover, still is, and ever will be an oracle; and whoever consults it with a due degree of ingenuity, will find it sufficiently efficacious to resolve all his scruples.....While on the other hand, silence and oblivion has been the lot of those temporary delusions; and if any record is to be traced of them, it only serves to excite our wonder, that such forgeries could find credit from one day to another.

What is occasionally said by Moses and other prophets, concerning the future state of God's people, the Jews, is alone sufficient to establish the divine authority of the holy writings. The promises made to them are literally fulfilled;

filled; the vengeance denounced against them is literally inflicted.

Captives they were frequently made; wanderers they became, and such they continue to be at this day, sojourning in the midst of all nations, united with none; peculiars every where, and by no human means to be again consolidated; which is altogether as wonderful as if the waters of any one particular river should remain in distinct globules, though scattered through the whole ocean.

The thread is even through the whole piece, and the ground the same though the work of so many hands, so often interrupted, and on so many various occasions resumed... With the Creation it begins, which, unless by immediate inspiration, could not have been treated historically; and although the sacred history of the Jews ends with an account of their establishment, after their return from the captivity in

Babylon, all that was to befall them afterwards to the end, is in a series of successive prophecies prefigured and prepared.

Again; the conduct of God towards his creatures in the several dispensations of his providence, as related in these books, is confirmed by antient rites and dates, and other marks of historical veracity.

And the conformity of sentiments concerning the great author of the universe, in these very antient writings, with those of the best and wisest of modern philosophers in this improved age of the world, will have more weight with those who know how apt men have been, in every age, to degenerate into idolatry, than all that is objected to them.

One great object is pursued throughout the Scriptures, from the expulsion of our first parents out of Eden, to the last of the prophets in Israel, namely,
the

the coming of a great Person under various titles ; the Deliverer from death and destruction ; the promised seed that was to come of the woman, not of man, and therefore of the virgin. A promise is made by God, that all the nations of the earth, the Gentile as well as the Jew, should be blessed in the seed of Abraham : this promise was renewed to Isaac, and again to Jacob, and, after that, to David^a.

In the old world, before the flood and after it, before the captivity, during that period, and after the return, the future expectation, the ultimate hope of Israel is often foretold in the coming of Messiah ; the time of his appearing fixed ; the circumstances of his birth declared ; the place assigned ; the character of his fore-runner, who was the other messenger, with that of his dis-

^a GEN. xviii. 18. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. PSALM lxxxix. 3. JEREM. xxxiii. 22, 26.

ciples given; his manner of life; his office, sufferings, death and resurrection, and the glorious consequences thereof to mankind delivered; with the state of God's people to the final accomplishment of all the promises in the resurrection to eternal life.

The evidence for these events from prophecy will be opened in the following chapters; in this I propose to consider what sort of men the antient prophets were; the divine authority of their writings, and the nature of the argument drawn from them.

The antient Jewish prophet then was a sacred monitor to the kings of Israel and Judah, whom he admonished in the name of God to adhere to his laws as delivered by Moses.

He warned them of the evil that was to come, if they should be disobedient, and comforted their posterity with a prospect of God's returning favour,
when

when the punishment for disobedience might be ended. He was sometimes a prince, as in the person of Isaiah, at other times a husbandman, as was Amos. Jeremiah was chosen from the womb to deliver the word of God to man.

And this is the invariable sense of the word prophesy, in the old and new Scriptures, either immediately, or by the means of another, to relate what the Lord hath spoken. Even the false prophet made use of the word in the same sense with the true: in the name of the Lord he opened his mission, as knowing no other credential would serve: and hence Mohammed, in his Koran, calls himself the messenger of God.

When the Lord says unto Moses, “I have made thee a god unto Pharoah,” it follows, “and Aaron, thy brother,
 3 “shall

“ shall be ^a thy prophet ^b.” Moses was the prophet, the messenger of God, one who was to speak all that God had commanded him, and Aaron was to speak what he had in command from Moses: the service of Aaron to Moses is compared with the service of Moses to the Lord. This is well explained in the following passage. When Moses complained that he was slow of speech, and not a man of words, the Lord says, Aaron can speak well, “ And “ thou shalt speak unto him, and put “ words in his mouth; and I will be “ with thy mouth and with his mouth, “ and I will teach you what ye shall “ do. And he shall be thy spokesman “ unto the people: and he shall be, “ EVEN he shall be to thee instead of a “ mouth, and thou shalt be to him in-

^a The Chaldee has מְתוּרַמֶּנֶךָ THY INTER-
PRETER, and so the Arabic.

^b Exod. vii. 1.

“stead of God^a.” “The Lord SPAKE
 “unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, &c.”
 The Lord is said to put his words into
 the mouth of his prophet^b. But when
 these words are recited by another,
 he also may be said to prophesy. In
 NEHEMIAH^c it is said, “thou hast ap-
 pointed prophets to preach.” Every
 one who instructed others in the word
 of God was a prophet at Jerusalem;
 and a preacher, who recited from the
 Scriptures spiritual affairs to the edifi-
 cation and comfort of others, was a
 prophet in the sense of St. Paul^d. They
 who gave thanks and praised the Lord
 with a harp, are said to prophesy^e.
 When the company of prophets met
 Saul, they had a psaltery, a tabret, a
 pipe, and a harp before them, and they
 prophesied, and he prophesied among

^a EXOD. iv. 15, 16.

^b JEREM. i. 9.

^c vi. 7.

^d I COR. xiv. 14.

^e I CHRON. xxv. 3.

them.

them^a. In like manner the prophets in Naioth, near Ramah, prophesied with their musical instruments, under the conduct of Samuel, their chief, when Saul's messengers joined them as himself had done.

These prophets are called the sons or disciples of the prophets^b, and are the same who were persecuted by Jezebel, when Obadiah took an hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water^c. Seventy of these men, the sons of the prophets, sought for Elisha^d. The singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise, were part of that grand assembly in the temple when Jehoida anointed Joash king^e. According to the order of David, "the number of them that were

^a 1 SAM. x.

^b 2 KINGS ii. 3, 5.

^c 1 KINGS xviii. 4.

^d 2 KINGS ii.

^e 2 CHRON. xxiii. 13.

"instructed

“instructed in the songs of the Lord,
 “even all that were cunning [skilful]
 “was two hundred four-score and
 “eight^a.” Moreover Hezekiah (when
 he cleansed the temple and restored the
 worship of God therein) “and the
 “princes commanded the Levites to
 “sing praise unto the Lord, with the
 “words of David and of Asaph the
 “seer^b.”

Hence it appears, that the schools
 of the prophets were not places in which
 prophesy, as the word means an im-
 mediate communication from God to
 man, was taught: this is an impious
 and absurd supposition. The truth is,
 in these schools the sons or disciples of
 the prophets were trained up for the
 use of the temple, and were taught to
 play on musical instruments, and to
 accompany the voice with them; and
 because they sung the hymns of inspir-

^a 1 CHRON. XXV. 7.

^b 2 CHRON. XXIX. 30.
 ed

ed men, and so delivered unto others the commands and words of God, they also are said to prophesy.

Nor may it be impertinent to adjoin the opinion of the great Pythagoras, ^a that prophesy should be honoured, in the use of odes or hymns sung with the lyre or harp to the praise of God.

The prophet is not always distinguished by one name or word. He is called sometimes a SEER, and this appellation is expressed by two different words. Witfius, in his dissertations ^b, owns he cannot tell the difference of the signification of the three names in Hebrew for a prophet.

^a Μαντικὴν πᾶσαν τιμᾶν, ὧδ' αἰς χερσὶν αἰσχετοῦ πρὸς λυραὴν, ὕμνῳ τε θεῶν καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν εὐλογον χάριν εἶναι.
Cafaubon and Menage insert and read οὐ πᾶσαν.

See Laertius.

^b Quænam ergo inter hæc tria nomina significationis est diversitas? Enimvero fateor me ignorare.
De nom. Prophet. p. 10.

The first and most general name for a prophet is NABI, which signifies one who relates to others what has been communicated from God by inspiration, either to himself immediately, or in the words of another, as of David or Asaph. This sense has been already considered. Of the other two names for a prophet, both of which are translated by the same word in English, A SEER, the one is much more extensive than the other. The full import of each of these words may easily be known by those who will be at the pains to enquire after them in the East.

In the Arabic dialect, NABA^a signifies to be lifted up, to pass from city to city, to discourse, to prophesy: the noun is used for a prophet or messenger. RAI^b is to see, know, con-

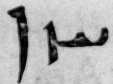
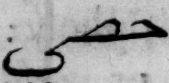
نبا^a

راي^b

sult;

fult, shew : the noun signifies knowledge of what is viewed by the eye or the mind. HHOZIM^a the seers, speculators, inspectors, and, in Isaiah, stargazers are so called from a word that signifies to know, mark, trace, calculate, write, have understanding and ability.

All these words occur in the following verse, "The acts of David are written in the books of Samuel the SEER^b, and in the book of Nathan the PROPHET^c, and in the book of Gad the SEER." Gad is always

^a חוזה from חזה, the Syr.  signifies to SEE; and so does the Arab.  And  has sometimes the like signification.

^b הראה merely the seer.

^c הנביא one that speaks eloquently.

^d החזה a speculator.

called

called by the same name, and so is Nathan, and Samuel^a.

In SAMUEL it is said, "before time
"in Israel, when a man went to en-
"quire of God, thus he spake, Come
"and let us go to the SEER: for he
"that is now called a PROPHET, was
"before time called a SEER^b." The
best comment on these words, is that
of R. D. Kimchi. The original is in
Buxtorf's large Hebrew Bible, the trans-
lation is as follows.

R. D. Kimchi upon 1 SAM. ix. 9.

"It is the received opinion of our
Rabbies, that Samuel wrote his book,
and that this transaction happened at
the latter end of his days; for Samuel
died before Saul, who did not reign
above two years: and if this be so,
what is meant by BEFORE-TIME, and

^a See 1 CHRON. xxi. also 2 CHRON. xxix. 25.
where Gad is called the king's SEER, and Nathan
the PROPHET.

^b ix. 9.

what by now? The right explication is, that the calling a prophet a seer; as it was an expression used BEFORE-TIME, so it was now when Samuel wrote this; for the expression BEFORE-TIME, does not mean that it was now left off; but the meaning is, that the appellation SEER, whereby Saul and his servant expressed NABI, in their saying, "IS THE SEER HERE?" "THE HOUSE OF THE SEER^b," was of old time; but nearer the days of Samuel, when prophesy was extended, and the words of the prophets were gone out through Israel, as well in admonitions as in predictions, they then called ROE a seer, NABI a prophet; because the meaning of Nabi is speech, according to that of ISAIAH^c גִּישׁוֹנִים, "THE FRUIT (or discourse) OF THE LIPS^d,"

^a Ver. 11.

^b Ver. 18.

^c Ivii. 19.

^d See also ZECH. ix. 17. Corn the young men, and wine the young women; יִנְּבִי יִנְּבִי shall make them speak.

though

though נָבִי & רֹאֵה are not of the same root. Whereas in the days of Samuel, there were some that said ROE, in the words of the antients, and some that said NABI. Now, the meaning of ROE is one who sees, in prophetic vision, things to come, or what he is immediately charged to reveal. The expression is parallel to that of RUTH*. IN FORMER TIME THIS WAS THE MANNER IN ISRAEL, &c. A MAN PLUCKED OFF HIS SHOE. This was the testimony used in buying and selling every thing formerly, and so it is at this day."

In short, the eastern words for prophesy are taken from the manner in which God communicated his commands to men. This was generally in visions, and therefore the PROPHET is called a SEER. Hence also the follow-

ers of Pythagoras, according to that excellent author Nemefius^a, asserted, that the only true prophesy, .or divine revelation of things future, was in dreams.

Again; the prophet was the messenger of God, one who delivered unto men the words which God had put into his mouth, and therefore the word for prophesying also signifies, as was observed before, to pass from one city to another, and to discourse.

The communication between God and man is by prayer, by the word of God, and by his works: In old times it was also by the prophets, and before them by the Angel of the Lord, and proper symbols of the divine presence.

The first men consulted God by prayers and sacrifices at his altars.

^a Τὰτο δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ δι' οὐραίων θεσπίζον ἡμῖν τὸ μέλλον· ὑπὲρ μόνην ἀληθὴ μαντείαν οἱ Πυθαγορῆοι λεγῶσιν εἶναι, τοῖς Ἑβραίοις ἀκολυθῆσαντες.

περὶ φύσεως Ἀνθρώπου.

When

When the law had been promulged from Sinai, and the priesthood established, Aaron and his successors put on the breast-plate of judgment, so called from its use; for Aaron was to bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord^a.

Every circumstance of this breast-plate and ephod is distinctly explained, and proper directions are given for the making every part of it, except only the URIM and THUMMIM, which Aben Ezra says was made by Moses himself. It was something put into the breast-plate^b. R.^c Levi Ben Gershom supposes this secret to have been the written name of God: R. Solomon, called Rashi, makes the same observation, adding, that it gave LIGHT and PERFECTION to his words. The learned Spencer, who imagines this, and al-

^a EXOD. xxviii. 30.

^b LEVIT. viii. 8.

^c See p. 106. col. 4. of his Comment, printed at Venice, for it is not in Buxtorf's Bible.

most every other Jewish rite, to have been borrowed from the Egyptians, which, however, is scarcely true of any of them, supposes the URIM and THUMMIM to mean the TERAPHIM, or a little image.

These words, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, were engraven on a plate of pure gold, and put on a blue lace, and upon the mitre, and upon Aaron's forehead: in like manner, the words URIM and THUMMIM may be supposed to have been written, woven, or engraven, and inserted in the breast-plate, and laid upon Aaron's heart as an admonition to him, bearing judgment, to act according to their import.

Forsterus thinks the URIM, or lights, signify the manifestations of the divine will, and the THUMMIM perfections or consummations, the accomplishments of them.

If the names of the tribes were engraven on the back of the stones, וַי, UPON

UPON or over them, as in the Hebrew, or *ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων* from the names, as in the Greek, the URIM and THUMMIM must have been what the jewelers call a FOIL, which would give lustre to the stones, and without it the names could not be read or seen through them. But as some of the stones were not diaphanous, this opinion is to be rejected.

Nor is it easy to discover in what manner the ANSWER was delivered when the priest enquired of the Lord by URIM and THUMMIM.

Maimonides^a says, the priest, when adorned with the breast-plate, was inspired by the Holy Spirit, under whose influence he answered the questions proposed to him.

When Joshua was presented by Moses, as one appointed by the Lord to be set over the congregation in the

^a De cultu divino, tract. iii. cap. 10.

place of Moses, who was to be gathered to his people, as his brother Aaron had already been gathered, he stood^a before Eleazar, who asked counsel for him, after the judgment of URIM before the Lord. If the words that immediately follow contain the answer, it must have been given by a voice. "At his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in^b," &c. When Saul, forsaken by God, enquired of the Lord, "The Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by URIM, nor by prophets^c."

Saul had slain the priests by the hand of Doeg the Edomite, four-score and five persons in one day. Abiathar with an ephod escaped and fled to David. Ahimelech the priest, the father of Abiathar, before Saul, who accused him

^a In every other instance, as R. D. Kimchi, in his commentary on ZECHAR. vi. 13. rightly observes, the priest was to stand before his Sovereign.

^b NUMB. xxvii. 21.

^c 1 SAM. xxviii. 6.

of enquiring of God for David, denies that he had enquired of God for him. But when the son of that priest came to David, with an ephod in his hand, David
 “ said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hi-
 “ ther the ephod. Then said David, O
 “ Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath
 “ certainly heard that Saul seeketh to
 “ come to Keilah, to destroy the city
 “ for my sake. Will the men of Kei-
 “ lah deliver me up into his hand?
 “ will Saul come down as thy servant
 “ hath heard? O Lord God of Israel,
 “ I beseech thee tell thy servant...And
 “ THE LORD SAID, He will come
 “ down^a.” This instance makes it
 probable, that the frequent inquiries,
 or consultations, of the Lord by David,
 were by the priest with his ephod,
 and that the answer was given in words
 by a VOICE. The priest could not
 appear before the Lord but in his pro-

^a I SAM. xxiii. xxiv.

per habit; he could not enquire of the Lord without the breast-plate; and if the Lord spake, it is more probable that he made use of the voice of his priest, than that he gave speech or utterance to any image, or any material object whatever, inserted in the breast-plate, and called URIM and THUMMIM.

To suppose, with Spencer, that it was an idol, is to accuse Moses of Idolatry, who, on the contrary, had it principally in view to remove from his people every circumstance that might alienate their minds from the worship of one God, or lead them to place any dependence upon any other being besides the Lord God of Israel. Is it to be imagined, that Moses would forbid them absolutely to make any image, and yet make a little image himself? Could he really believe that any divine powers resided in the idol he is supposed to have put in the breast-plate? impossible. In the present case of consulting

sulting God by URIM, or the ephod, or the breast-plate of judgment, or the high priest in his robes, the Sovereign indeed appears before the priest; but he addresses not him, nor the ephod, nor the breast-plate, nor any part of it, but the Lord only; that not the least occasion may be given for Idolatry; and the answer is from the Lord, by the mouth of his priest, who, in this case, officiates as a prophet.

But to proceed... Another mode of communication, sometimes used by the Lord, was “in thoughts, from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,” according to the elegant expressions of the Temanite in JOB.

Of this sort was Abraham’s dream, in which the Lord foretold the bondage of his posterity in Egypt, and their deliverance, with the promise of long life to himself, before he should be ga-

thered in peace to his fathers^a. Such was the dream of Jacob, when he beheld “ a ladder ^b set upon the earth, “ and the top of it reached unto Heaven, the Angels of God ascending “ and descending upon it^c.” Abimelech was reprov’d and admonish’d in a dream by the Lord, concerning Sarah^d. The dreams of Joseph and of Pharaoh and his servants were divine^e, as was also that of Nebuchadnezar, concerning the fate of many kingdoms^f. All these were worthy the interposition of God, and carried the evidence of their divine original, by the revelations they made, and the strong impressions left by them upon the mind. Abraham and Jacob are expressly said to have

^a GEN. XV. 12, 13, 14, 15.

^b See this vision explained in chap. II. concerning the Messiah.

^c GEN. XXVIII. 12.

^d GEN. XX. 3.

^e GEN. XXXVII. 5. xl. 5. xli. 1. ^f DAN. II. 1.

been

been seized with a religious horror, and the rest to have been under such conviction as was irresistible.

As to the delegated manifestation of the presence and will of Jehovah to the patriarchs, to Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, it is the subject of the second chapter, concerning Messiah.

And the most frequent of these extraordinary communications of the designs of God and of his will was by his prophets, whom he inspired with that knowledge which was necessary for the correction and comfort of his people in every age: but more especially for the preservation of true religion, which was to be traced among the Jews only, of all the nations of the earth; and as St. Paul says, “chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God^a.” The oracles which contained the glorious promise of Messiah.

^a Rom. iii. 2.

Not to the Jew only, but the Gentile also, to all nations of the earth is the promise, that in the seed of Abraham all should be blessed; all united as brethren under one Lord, the Savior of them all.

In these sacred books, therefore, all may discern the wisdom of God, from the creation of the world, in providing for the instruction and happiness of man.

In the old world, before the deluge, Enoch and Noah prophesied; before the deliverance from Egypt, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph prophesied; in the wilderness, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Balaam, were prophets; after them, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Heman, Jeduthun, David, Solomon, Elijah, and Elisha, &c.... And of the last, so much is said in the Scriptures, that I presume the reader will forgive a digression in his favor, as it contains what the author apprehends to be a rational

tional and convincing answer to the charge of cruelty, against this holy and inspired person, on account of his conduct towards the little children of Bethel.

If these little children, as they are called, were no other than little girls and boys, playing in the streets of Bethel, and innocently, or in mirth and sport, rather than from malice and design, distinguishing an old man by the naked appearance of his head; and, if no more is to be understood by going up than passing on, it will be very difficult to account for the prophet's curse, and the vengeance that followed it: "He turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord: and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." It is neither profitable nor pleasing to

expatiate on the horrors of such a dreadful scene: the adversary will do this for us. Nor is it fair and candid to make hasty inferences in any cause, much less, where the honor of God and his prophets is concerned, without considering the true import of the words upon which the accusation is grounded.

In books of great antiquity, written in a language now lost, we may sometimes be mistaken: some few words, or passages, may have been omitted or inserted: the sense may, by various means, have been disturbed.---In short, any thing should be allowed, rather than the moral character of God be impeached.—And whether there is any ground for reproaching the prophet, or his God, with rage or injustice, in the case of the inhabitants of Bethel, will best appear by considering who these LITTLE children were; what their offence; the character of the city, and

and that of Elisha.—“ There came
 “ forth little children out of the city,
 “ and mocked him, and said unto
 “ him, Go up, thou bald-head.”

The word here rendered LITTLE, is a general term for quantity or quality, which, when applied to the offspring of men, does not always imply LITTLE, or SMALL in STATURE, but is oftentimes used to distinguish them from the more ADVANCED in years, the YOUNG* from the OLD. The other word is in very many places used for young men and SERVANTS, and might very properly have been so rendered here, especially as females seem to be acquitted by the structure of the words in the original.—Joseph

* In the Arab. language قط signifies FAMU-

LATUS FUIT, SERVIVIT? from whence قطبين

FAMULI, SERVI, affectæ, domestici.

נער.

D

was

was not a LITTLE ONE in the nursery sense of the word, when he interpreted the dreams of the Egyptian men, and yet the same word is used in both places; tho' in our translation it is said, that he was "a young man, an Hebrew, a servant to the guard^a;" and of the young men of Bethel, that they were CHILDREN. Was the lad Benjamin, Joseph's brother, a child, when he had many children^b? Was Joshua an INFANT, when the "Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend: and he turned again into the camp; but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a YOUNG MAN, departed not out of the tabernacle^c." The YOUNG MAN of the men of Succoth that Gideon caught, and who described unto him the "princes of Succoth and the elders thereof, three-

^a GEN. xli. 12.

^b GEN. xliii. 8.

^c EXOD. xxxiii. 11.

“score and seventeen men,” was no infant^a. The YOUNG MAN out of Bethlehem Judah, a Levite, who dwelt with Micah, this person is, in the very next verse, called “the man who departed out of the city from Bethlehem Judah^b.” And “Zadok a young man mighty of valour^c,” and Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth^d;” and “Gehazi, the servant of Elisha^e,” were they men or children?—In these, and many other places, the child or LAD is young man or servant; and therefore the LITTLE children, or LADS, as they are called, were YOUNG MEN who came forth out of the city of Bethel, on purpose, as it should seem, either of their own accord, or encouraged, and, it is not improbable, employed by their fathers and masters, in

^a JUDGES viii. 14.

^b JUDGES xvii. 7.

^c 1 CHRON. xii. 28.

^d 2 SAM. xvi. 1, 2.

^e 2 KINGS v. 26.

that rude and impious mockery of the prophet, and his master and his God.

It is farther to be observed, that the meeting of the prophet and these LADS was not accidental: "they came forth out of the city in numbers to insult an old man, the servant of the living God." The indignity was not intended against Elisha alone: they did not only reflect upon his age, and his person, and character, by calling him bald-head, but upon his master Elijah, and in him upon the service and servants of God, and upon God himself: for when they say to Elisha, GO UP, and repeat it, they bid him ascend as his master had done before him. They mock the rapture of Elijah, who "WENT UP by a whirl-wind into heaven." They make use of the very same word in bidding Elisha GO UP, as is used in the GOING UP of his master.

The

The prophet might, and, if we may judge from all the rest of his actions, probably would have forgiven any personal affront to himself; but is surely justified in resenting an impious mockery on his master and his God.

It should also be considered, whether these LITTLE ONES, who came forth out of the city and mocked, would not have gone farther, if the just judgment of Almighty God had not prevented them. They who came forth in numbers, and began with mocking, might have ended with killing the good old man, who had so often preserved the lives of others, friends and foes, the cities and armies of Israel. And then the objection, since objections must be made, would have probably been; How came the Lord to suffer this great prophet to be put to death by the wicked and idolatrous sons of Bethel? Why did he not destroy them by fire from Heaven, or

by wild beasts from the woods?—The perverseness would have been the same, though expressed a different way... And it is for the honour of truth, that her adversaries may be thus made to confute themselves.

It is said, the prophet “curfed them “in the NAME of the LORD, and there “came forth two she bears out of “the wood, and tare forty and two of “them.”

The curse and the bears both came from the Lord; for no prophet could declare any thing in the NAME of the LORD without having a commission for it. When Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, it was “in the name of the “God of Israel.” They delivered no more than they received from him who inspired them. They obeyed the divine impulse. And, in general, to act IN THE NAME of another, is to act by his
3 authority.

authority. If the curse therefore pronounced by Elisha had not proceeded from the Lord; if it had been the effect of anger in the prophet, and not the just denunciation of Divine Providence, so signal an event in the destruction of the YOUTH of Bethel would not so soon have followed it.

If we enquire into the character of Elisha, we shall always find him, as hinted already, good, merciful, and compassionate; if into the character of the citizens of Bethel, we shall find them obstinate idolaters. When our prophet was first called to minister unto Elijah, being in the field ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen^a, he prayed that he might kiss his father and his mother before he followed him, and he slew a yoke of oxen, and boiled their flesh, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. He was in such fa-

^a 1 KINGS xix. 19, 20, 21.

your with God, as to obtain a double portion of the spirit that was upon Elijah when taken up into Heaven^a. He relieved Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom, and their armies, when greatly distressed for want of water^b. He healed the waters of Jericho, which before were deadly to the inhabitants and their land^c. At Gilgal he prevented the death of the sons of the prophets, by turning their poisoned pottage into wholesome food^d. He took compassion on the poor widow, and relieved her by miracle from her distress, enabling her to pay her creditors and to support herself and her children^e. He obtained a son for the good Shunamite, which dying, he restored to life again^f. He cured Naaman of his leprosy, and refused his gifts^g.

^a 2 KINGS ii. 10.

^b 2 KINGS iii. 20.

^c 2 KINGS ii. 21.

^d 2 KINGS iv. 38.

^e iv. 1.

^f iv. 8, 18.

^g v. 8, 15.

He

He even condescended to recover the ax, which the poor man had borrowed and lost. When forces were sent to DOTHAN to apprehend him, he prayed unto the Lord, that the people might be under such a deception as not to know him, or the place they were in, till he led them to Samaria, and then he prayed that they might see clearly again. And when the king of Israel would have taken this advantage of them and have smote them, he forbade it, saying, "wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." And again, when Samaria was besieged by Benhadad; when the famine was so great that an asses head sold for four-score pieces of silver, and the fourth-part of a kab of

doves dung, or rather a kab of pulse or vetches, for the dung of pigeons could not be eat, for five pieces—in this great distress the prophet delivers them both from the besiegers and the famine; and this not by destroying the enemy, but by throwing them into such a panic as to cause them to fly and to “leave their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was:” And thus the siege was raised, and the city supplied with all that it wanted.

From all these instances it appears to have been the office and character of Elisha, to shew mercy, and to relieve the distressed. He seems to have been raised up, and called to do these good offices; to give life, and not to take it away.

He who restored life to the son of the good Shunamite, and so often saved the lives of others, would not have

* 2 KINGS vi. 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, vii. 7.

slain in anger, with his curses, little children.

But if the inhabitants of Bethel were not only idolaters, but also interested idolaters; if they were the enemies of God and his holy prophets for their interest's sake; if miracles were wrought amongst them in vain, to effectuate their conversion; if they still remained obstinate and impenitent; if the insult offered to our prophet was an act of defiance both of him and his God, and the return he made was what the Lord had put into his mouth, he should be acquitted of anger and cruelty, and the justice of God in his judgments acknowledged.

Jeroboam had set up in Bethel, as an object of worship, one of his golden calves, and called them the gods which brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, and "made priests of the lowest of the people." And "he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places

“ places which he had made ; so he
 “ offered upon the altar which he
 “ made in Bethel, and burnt incense^a.”

This no doubt was a gratification to the men of Bethel : hence they looked upon the prophet as their special adversary : hence arose their hatred to, and their persecution of him ; and hence that obduracy had its rise, which even miracles could not soften.

The hand of their king was dried up and restored, and their altar was rent, and the ashes poured out as a sign from the Lord : and it was at the same time declared against the altar^b, that a child of the house of David, Josiah “ by
 “ name, should offer the priests of the
 “ high places upon it, and mens bones
 “ be burnt upon it.”

Notwithstanding all which, “ Jero-
 “ boam returned not from his evil
 “ way, but made again, of the lowest

^a 1 KINGS xii. 28, &c.

^b 1 KINGS xiii. 2.

“ of

“ of the people, priests of the high
 “ places, whosoever would, he con-
 “ secrated him, and he became one
 “ of the priests of the high places.”—

Thus the prince set the example of impiety to his people: and the people gloried in their impious conformity to the will of their prince.

God, however, in his own good time, was justified: for the same altar having been continued till the reign of Josiah, he burnt the bones out of the sepulchres in the mount, sparing, however, those of the man of God who came from Judah, and of the prophet from Samaria, and then burnt the high places, the grove and the altar, which last he reduced to a powder, that no superstitious relick of it might be left.

But then, if he slew the priests and burnt bones upon the altar, it was not by way of sacrifice in a legal or religious

ous sense ; but, on the contrary, as it is expressly said, to pollute the altar.

Upon the whole then, if Elijah called fire from heaven to destroy idolaters ; if Josiah slew the priests ; if God is ever jealous of his glory, and will not suffer it to be given to another ; if idolatry is punished with great severity, as utterly subversive of all true Religion, we ought not to be surprized that the prophet of the Lord is preserved, and the honor of his service asserted, by the destruction of his idolatrous enemies, who may have been the sons of the priests of the high places, or perhaps the priests themselves, as Jeroboam made no distinction of persons.

Having thus vindicated the character of Elisha from the charge of cruelty, we may now proceed to take a view of those prophets whose writings are still extant : the first of whom is Jonah. He foretold the restoration of
the

the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, by Jeroboam. And, by the way, Sir Isaac Newton was of opinion, that the book of Jonas is the history of that prophet written by another hand.

But, however this may be, the sending a Jewish prophet to Ninevah, the capital of Assyria, was a remarkable instance of the goodness of God, as it prepared them for a more kind reception of Israel when removed from Samaria by Shalmaneser King of Assyria.

Amos is the second of the prophets, though the Jews have ignorantly placed him after Hosea. He prophesied under Jeroboam and Uzziah.

Hosea flourished under Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.

Isaiah, a prince and a prophet, is supposed to have been sawn asunder by the command of Manassah^b.

^a 2 KINGS xiv. 25.

^b See HEB. xi. 37.

According

According to his own account, he prophesied under the same kings with Hosea, though later than him, he having entered upon the holy office of prophet about the beginning of the reign of Uzziah, whereas Isaiah did not commence prophet till near the end of his reign.

Micah flourished under Jotham, the son of Azariah. He was contemporary with the two former prophets.

Nahum prophesied in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah.

Habakkuk, who foretells the captivity of the Jews, under Nebuchadnezzar, entered upon his ministry towards the end of the reign of Manasseh, or the beginning of the reign of Josiah.

Zephaniah says himself, that he prophesied in the days of Josiah.

Joel was contemporary with Zephaniah^a.

^a See Sect. IX.

Jeremiah prophesied under the same king, and survived the destruction of Jerusalem, which he had foretold and lamented.

Daniel, according to the account he gives of himself, was carried into Babylon a youth, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah.

Ezekiel began to prophesy in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, and continued his ministry above twenty-five years.

Obadiah foretells the destruction of Idumea by Nebuchadnezzar after he had destroyed Jerusalem. He is therefore a different person from that Obadiah, who was governor of Ahab's house, mentioned in the first book of *KINGS*^a.

They who allegorize names of people and places, suppose the Romans to be meant by the Idumeans in this pro-

^a xviii. 3.

phesy; but such fancies destroy the true interpretation and real use of prophesy.

Haggai dates his oracles in the second year of Darius, the first day of the sixth month. According to Josephus, this Darius was the son of Hystaspes; according to others, Darius Nothus.

Zechariah prophesied in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius. He was the son of Iddo the prophet, who returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel.

A good critical commentary upon the book of this prophet would be the best key to the opening of all the rest.

Malachi, the last of the prophets of whom we have any genuin remains, before the coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus, seems to have arisen after the return of Nehemiah, and the death of Ezra; for, otherwise, it is probable some notice would have been taken

taken of him in the books extant under their names.

Thus I have endeavoured to be as precise as possible in settling the times in which these prophets severally flourished; because it is the first step towards a right understanding of their writings.

If the warnings denounced, and the consolations promised, were completed in the life of the prophet, who delivered them (which was sometimes the case) it would be a vain search to look for their completion afterwards... And thus we might be misled to fasten our own errors on the oracles of truth itself.

It was therefore a very sensible proposition, made by Samuel Torshill^a, of disposing the Bible into a method and harmony, by transposing the order of books and chapters, inserting the sa-

^a He had been a preceptor in the royal family: and this piece of his (which is to be found in a collection of tracts called the PHÆNIX) is addressed to the Lords and Commons assembled in parliament.

cred oracles according to the times they were delivered in; and the Psalms in those places, or on those occasions, which they were framed to suit, in such a manner, that by the mere force of series and connection, the historical and prophetical parts might reciprocally explain and authenticate each other.

But there is still another consideration, which reflects an additional authority on the prophecies, and which, therefore, ought not to be passed over in silence.

By the law of Moses, which he received from God, the prophet who pretended to divine inspiration without being inspired, or who prophesied in the name of other gods than the God of Israel, was to be put to death. “The
 “prophet which shall presume to speak
 “a word in my name, which I (the
 “Lord) have not commanded him to
 “speak, or that shall speak in the
 “name

“ name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in
 “ thine heart, How shall we know the
 “ word which the Lord hath not spoken?
 “ ken? When a prophet speaketh in
 “ the name of the Lord, if the thing
 “ follow not, nor come to pass, that is
 “ the thing which the Lord hath not
 “ spoken; but the prophet hath spoken
 “ it presumptuously: thou shalt not
 “ be afraid of him^a.”

Under such a sentence therefore, it is not easy to imagine, that any man in his senses would obtrude himself upon his sovereign, as a sacred monitor commissioned by the God of Israel, to foretel events, the success of which he must answer for with his life. If indeed the oracle to be delivered was agreeable to the views of the king, and the prophet was to foretel no other than favourable events, some might presume to dis-

^a DEUT. XVIII. 20, 21, 22.

charge the office though not inspired... But then, it more frequently happened, that the prophet was to deliver truths that did not please. Thus, when Ahab mentions Micaiah, the son of Imlah, as one by whom he might enquire of the Lord, he adds, "but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." And this prophet makes the same declaration with every other prophet really inspired; "What the Lord said unto me, that will I speak." Hence he foretold the death of Ahab, in the battle with the king of Syria at Ramoth-Gilead; and the king, in resentment, ordered him to be put in prison, and fed with bread of affliction till he returned in peace^a.

In like manner Jeremiah was smitten and put into a dungeon, and in danger of his life.

^a 1 KINGS xxii.

Thus

Thus the treatment of the prophets was not in general such as would induce men to take upon them that high and dangerous office, unless called to it by the appointment of God; for, to use the words of St. Paul, “ they were
 “ stoned, they were sawn afunder,
 “ were tempted, were slain with the
 “ sword; they wandered about in
 “ sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being
 “ destitute, afflicted, tormented: of
 “ whom the world was not worthy.”
 Sad recompence for the greatest public virtues, for serving their princes, and endeavouring to preserve in safety the states of Judah and Jerusalem, by warning them, from time to time, of the dangers of disobedience!

Our Lord Jesus, at the same time he laments the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to follow his death, assigns a reason for it, by reproaching that city

* HEB. xi. 37, 38.

with the murder of holy and inspired men.--“ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which
 “ killest the prophets, and stonest them
 “ that are sent unto thee : how often
 “ would I have gathered thy children
 “ together, as a hen doth gather her
 “ brood under her wings, and ye would
 “ not ? Behold, your house is left de-
 “ solate : and verily I say unto you,
 “ Ye shall not see me until the time
 “ come when ye shall say, Blessed is
 “ he that cometh in the name of the
 “ Lord^a.”

2. It follows, that the liberty they took in reprov- ing princes, and op- posing false prophets, who flattered them, and approved of measures dis- approved of by God, ought to be re- ceived as another mark of the true pro- phet, and the credit and authority that is due to him and his oracles. The old Scriptures abound with instances of

^a LUKE xiii. 34, 35. MATT. xxiii. 37. JE- REM. xxxviii 15, 20.

this honest freedom, as in Micaiah towards Ahab, Nathan to David, Ahijah to Jeroboam and his wife, Elijah to Ahab and Jezebel, and Jehoram, &c.

3. To this firmness of the prophet we may add, what indeed was the ground of it, his own conviction, which must have exceeded any ordinary motives, or Abraham would not have been prevailed upon by it to have sacrificed his only son Isaac, begotten out of due time, and heir to the promises made unto his father. The impression upon the mind in a divine vision in the night troubled the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah declares, the Lord is stronger than him^a; which shews, that his mind was overpowered by the spirit. “^b Saith the Lord, Is not my word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in

^a xx. 7.

^b xxiii. 29.

“pieces?”

“pieces?”—The only objection to this evidence for prophecy is, that madmen and enthusiasts are also under an impulse that is irresistible. But the writings of the prophets, the confirmation of their oracles by events, the proof of an extraordinary power by miracles, and every other circumstance belonging to the character, sufficiently clear them from any suspicion of enthusiasm or madness.

4. But the prophet was not left without sufficient evidence of his divine commission, till the completion of his prophecy by the event. For we find the sovereign often required a SIGN, as if he had a right to one, and it was granted him. Moses and Aaron exhibited many SIGNS before Pharaoh and the Egyptians, as a proof that they were the servants of the living God. Gideon prayed the Lord, that he would give him a SIGN, that it was he that talked with him, when he promised
to

to assist him against the Midianites. A SIGN was given to Eli, by the death of his two sons, Hophni and Phineas^a. Jeroboam had several SIGNS given him, when the man of God prophesied against the altar in Bethel. The hand of Jeroboam was withered and restored again, and, as already mentioned, “the altar also was rent, and the ashes “poured out from the altar, according “to the SIGN which the man of God “had given by the word of the Lord^b.” The Lord himself gave a SIGN to Ahaz when he refused to ask one:— “Behold, a virgin shall conceive^c.” In Hezekiah’s sickness a SIGN is granted him according to his own request, and the Lord brought the shadow on the dial ten degrees backward^d.

^a 1 SAM. ii. 34.

^b 1 KINGS xiii. 3, 5.

^c ISAIAH vii. 11, 14.

10, 11.

^d 2 KINGS xx. 8, 9,

Many

Many SIGNS were given to the houses of Israel and Judah^a.

5. When no SIGNS were given, no miracle wrought, the accomplishment of such oracles as came to pass soon after they were foretold, afforded sufficient reason to believe that the remotest prophesy would also be fulfilled. Instances of this sort occur in every one of the prophets. When Isaiah, or any other prophet, had foretold the fate of Israel or Judah, their captivity and return, and these and many other oracles, delivered by them, were confirmed by events, could any doubt arise in the mind concerning the accomplishment of those prophecies which relate to Christ and other events?

6. It is to be observed, that the prophets, whether living at the same time

^a 2 KINGS xix. 29. ISAIAH lxvi. 19. JEREM. xlv. 29. EZEK. iv. 3. xii. 6. xiv. 8. xxiv. 24, 27, &c.

or in different ages, appear to have delivered what they said without any communication with one another. They receive and deliver their oracles separately, and yet agree in every event, however remote it may be, which they foretell.

7. The perfect agreement of all they said with the law of Moses, distinguished true from false prophets. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

8. Not only a conformity with the law, but an unity of design is easily discoverable in the oracles of the Old Scriptures. They declare the same judgments and visitations, according to the most righteous dispensations of God's providence, in protecting his people, in correcting and reforming them, and

^a Compare ISAIAH viii. 19, 20. with DEUT. xiii. 1, 2, &c.

destroying

destroying all their adversaries. And, lastly,

9. The great end and design of all prophesy, is to make all men happy in the union of Jew and Gentile, and the restoration and eternal happiness of mankind by the coming of Christ.

Now this great event will, in the following chapters, appear to have been foretold by the prophets, in such manner, and at such periods, as to afford incontestable evidence, that Jesus is the Christ.

Even this account of the prophets opens the nature of the argument from prophesy, and shews, that it is an evidence not inferior to demonstration.

Events extraordinary and miraculous, such as relate to the birth, and life, and death, and resurrection of Jesus, having been published seven hundred years before they happened, must necessarily infer such knowledge of the designs of God, in his governing the world, as
 I could

could not proceed from any other than himself.

Prophecy is therefore a proof of the existence of God and his providence, and of the truth of his holy word delivered in Scripture.

It is the strongest and the clearest evidence that can be given of a revelation from God: it shews the divine power in bringing to pass what divine knowlege alone could have foretold, and is therefore as miraculous as any other instance of omnipotency. The appeal is to our senses, and we hear the prophecy and see its accomplishment: it is not an evidence resulting from long deductions and abstracted reasonings, but is matter of fact, and, consequently, must be allowed to be every way unexceptionable.

The circumstances that relate to Christ, are too extraordinary to have been imagined without revelation, or to have been fulfilled in Jesus without

out the power of God; and if they had not been miraculous, or out of the ordinary course of nature, they are, however, too many in number to have ever happened by chance.

Besides, the prophets who lived in different ages, foretell the same events, and many of these are so remote in time, from the oracles in which they are foretold, so numerous, so particular, and so exactly fulfilled, that it will be very difficult, if possible, for any one, who is not very ignorant and very negligent, or influenced by strong prejudice, to refuse his assent to such a scale of evidence, or resist the argument arising from it in support of the Christian Religion.

C H A P. II.

O F T H E M E S S I A H.

THE natural properties of things, though separated from common to religious use, continue the same. They are hallowed by such separation ; they are applied to greater objects, and employed in the highest service, but are not altered in themselves. The frankincense, the salt, the oil, are the same, whether in the temple or the cottage, and are subservient to like purposes. Salt was ever held, from its purity and preserving quality, a symbol of lasting friendship, and, as such, used not only in every feast, but every covenant and treaty. The opinion of Pythagoras, who had visited the Chaldeans and the Magi, and been initiated in Egypt, concerning salt, was, that it ought to be produced or exhibited

F

as

as a memorial of justice, or an admonition to do what is just; for it preserves whatever it is united with, and is of the purest nature, being made of the water of the sea^a. The odors of frankincense, as agreeable and costly, are a circumstance of acknowledged grandeur and magnificence, and perhaps they were made use of in sacrifices, not only on that account, but also because they were useful in defending the offering from flies, and other insects, and qualifying the fumes which arose from it.

The properties of oil are such as have recommended it to various offices civil and religious. It not only preserves itself, but also gives a lustre to other bodies, is a proper vehicle for

^a Παρα Χαλδαιοις εγενετο και Μαγοις — Και εν Αιγυπτω εις τα Αδύτα. — Περι των άλων, ότι δει παρατιθεσθαι προς υπομνησιν τε δικαιοι· οι γαρ αλεις παν σωζουσιν οτι αν παραλαβωσι, και γεγονασιν εκ των καθαρωτατων, υδατος και θαλαττης.

DIOP. LAERT.

odoriferous perfumes, is soft and bright, and makes the face to shine, which was of old esteemed a symbol of joy and magnificence. To which may be added, that as it feeds and maintains light in the lamp, so it served to denote the influences of the spirit in inspired men.

Hence the king, the prophet, the priest, consecrated persons and things, were anointed to give them a lustre, and denote and publish the separation of them from common men, and common use. Hence the offerings of a sweet savor were with oil and frankincense; but the sin offering was without them*. Oil was poured on the head of Aaron with such profusion, as to run down upon his beard, and the skirts of his garment. His sons were anointed with oil, and it flowed down

* LEVIT. V. 11.

^b PSALM CXXXIII. 2. EXOD. XXIX. 7.

their garments, and "he was hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his son's garments with him." The altar, and all its vessels, the tabernacle, the laver, and its foot, were anointed.

When Jacob set up the stone for a pillar, or a monument of God's presence and favor to him, in Bethel, he poured oil upon the top of it. And when the Lord appeared again to him, and renewed the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, "he set up a pillar "in the place where he talked with "him, even a pillar of stone; and he "poured a drink offering thereon, "and he poured oil thereon".

The smooth stones that Nestor sat upon, in the *Odysey*, are described as shining with ointment. The Eastern people anointed their heads, faces,

^a EXOD. XXIX. 21.

^b GEN. XXXV. 14.

^c Λευκοί, ἀποσιλβούτες αλειφατός.

lib. 3.

breast,

breast, and bodies with oil; which retains sweet odors, resists putrefaction, and no insect can live in it. Hence when the Goddess in Homer undertakes to preserve the body of Patroclus, she 'instills the ambrosia and red nectar into it; and the good Samaritan, in the gospel, is said to have poured wine and oil into the wounds of the man that fell among thieves, as if it could cure as well as consecrate *.

It has been said, that kings, priests, and prophets were anointed, and the word anointed is often used for prince, or king. Cyrus is called the Lord's anointed. Saul was anointed captain before he was king^c. Zerubbabel with his crown of gold, and Joshua, the high priest, with his crown of silver,

* Πατροκλῶ δ' αὖτ' ἀμβροσίην καὶ νηκτάρ' ἐρυθροῦ
σταξε κατὰ ῥινῶν, ἵνα ὁ χρῶς ἐμπεδὸς ᾖ. Τ. 38.

^b LUKE x. See also II. Σ. 350. Ψ. 186. II. 670.
Compare Ξ. 170—177. with ESTHER ii. 12.

^c I SAM. ix. 16.

are the two anointed ones in Zechariah, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth^a. The prophet Isaiah says, "the Lord hath anointed me to preach "good tidings"^b."

So usual was the phrase of the anointed for king, that in the parable of the trees, in the book of Judges, they are said to go forth to anoint a king over them; when the olive-tree, to whom the first offer of the crown is made, refuses to leave its fatness, "where-
"with, by me, they honour God
"and man"^c....Insinuating, as it should seem, that to anoint him was to gild gold.

Hence it follows, that the expected king of the Jews, their greatest prince, prophet, legislator, priest, each of which offices alone would have intitled him to the name of Messiah, or anointed, should most eminently be cal-

^a iv. 14.

^b lxi. 1.

^c ix. 9.

led by the Jews the Messiah, that is, the Christ.

Nor are these all the titles by which this divine Being is distinguished in the Old Scriptures. He is the Lord, the person who appeared so often in the name of God, under the first dispensation; who appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, to Isaac in Gerar, to Jacob in Bethel, and was seen of Moses in the wilderness. He is the leader of the host of Israel, the word of God, by whom he made the world; by whom he conversed with the first and best of human kind; whom he sent as a Savior to redeem his people from their servitude and oppression in Egypt, their captivity in Babylon^a; and at last, in the flesh to redeem the world from the pollution of sin, and dominion of death; the messenger of God; the messenger of the covenant^b;

^a PSAL. cvii. 20.

^b MALACHI iii. 1.

the son of God; the angel of the Lord; one distinguished as such from all others called the sons of God, who are ministring angels^a; the desire of all nations^b; descended from Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed^c; the son of David, and in consequence of this descent, the son of man; whose appearance or likeness, as a man, was, upon the throne, supported by the Cherubim^d; and whose likeness came with the clouds of Heaven to the Antient of days. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Antient of days, and they brought him near before him^e."

^a Compare JOB i. 6. with DANIEL iii. 25.

^b HAGGAI iii. 7. ^c GEN. xviii. 18.

^d EZEK. i. 26. ^e DAN. vii. 13.

It

It is therefore evident, that all the several appellations, given to our Lord and Savior, in the New Testament, are no other than had long before been given by the prophets to him, whom the Jews expected as their deliverer, and their king, about the time when Jesus was born*.

Before

* The Jews were related to him in an especial manner, as the Angel of the covenant,—their Redeemer from captivity,—the giver of their law,—their guide in the wilderness,—the constant governor of their state;—and, at last, when he assumed human nature, as their king, by descent from David.

Bishop Conybeare's Sermons, vol. I. p. 48.

—The God of Israel, the Divine Person, who is many times stiled, in the Old Testament, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, frequently appeared to them, and was in after ages made flesh, and for about three and thirty years dwelt on earth amongst men. Shuckford's Connexion, vol. III. p. 43. See also p. 422.

The same opinion is also maintained by Tertulian, in his Crede, and by all those who are called the Fathers.

Regula

Before I proceed to ascertain from the prophets, the time and place for the appearance of Messiah in the flesh, and other circumstances of his life, death, and resurrection from the dead, it may not be improper here to take a view of him in his frequent appearances before and under the law, as they occur in the Scriptures only, without any regard to what the Jews have written

Regula est autem fidei, ut jam hinc quid defendamus profiteamur, illa scilicet qua creditur unum omnino Deum esse ; nec alium præter mundi conditorem, qui universa de nihilo produxerit per verbum suum primo omnium demissum. Id VERBUM FILIUM EJUS APPELLATUM, IN NOMINE DEI VARIE VISUM A PATRIARCHIS, IN PROPHETIS SEMPER AUDITUM, POSTREMO DELATUM ex spiritu Patris Dei et virtute, in virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, et ex ea natum egisse Jesum Christum, exinde prædicasse novam legem, et novam promissionem regni cœlorum. Virtutes fecisse: fixum cruci: tertiâ die resurrexisse ; in cœlos ereptum sedisse ad dextram Patris ; misisse vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti qui credentes agat—&c.

Tertul. de præscr. Hæreticorum.

upon

upon the words, METATRON^a, MAMRE^b, and SHEKINAH^c.

In the beginning, when God created the world, it was by his word, by the same he spoke to men in old times; and whenever he appeared to men, it was by his representative. This is evident from the discourse God has with Moses, when his faithful servant desired to see the

^a Dr. Hyde seems to think that METATRON, which word, however, he does not explain, means Gabriel; though he confesses, that some Jews suppose it to mean Enoch and others, שר העולם THE PRINCE of the world. Hist. Rel. vet. Pers. p. 262. edit. 1760. METATRON is the Latin word MEDIATOREM. Several instances of the like words may be seen in different notes upon part of the Mishnah, by the incomparable Mr. Guise. קפנדרין which L'EMPEREUR had most absurdly rendered by κηπαιαν and ανδρα, is the Latin word COMPENDIARIA. p. 16, 40. אפיפירות, which Maimonides and Cohen de Lara could not interpret, is the Greek word Αποφορα, δενδρα μη φεροντα καρπον. 68. סילון is σωλην. 69. 72.

^b The Logos or word.

^c The glory, the presence of God, that manifestation of his presence in which he is supposed to reside.

glory

glory of the Lord. " And he said, I
 " will make all my goodness pass before
 " thee, and I will proclaim the name
 " of the Lord before thee ; and will be
 " gracious to whom I will be gracious,
 " and will shew mercy on whom I will
 " shew mercy. And he said, Thou
 " canst not see my face ; for there shall
 " no man see me and live. And the
 " Lord said, Behold there is a place by
 " me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock,
 " And it shall come to pass, while my
 " glory passeth by, that I will put thee
 " in a cleft of the rock, and will cover
 " thee with my hand while I pass by.
 " And I will take away my hand and
 " thou shalt see," not my face, which
 cannot be seen, but him that follows
 me, who acts for me, my vicegerent,
 for all that relates to this earth and its
 inhabitants ; by whom this world was
 created, through whom it shall be
 saved.

Thus

Thus may this passage be rendered, differently from the present translations.

The same is the promised Angel—
 “Behold I send an Angel before thee,
 “to keep thee in the way, and to
 “bring thee into the place which I
 “have prepared. Beware of him,
 “and obey his voice; provoke him
 “not, for he will not pardon your
 “transgressions: for MY NAME IS IN
 “HIM: But if thou shalt obey his
 “voice, and do all that I speak,”—that
 is, by him who is the Word;—“then
 “I will be an enemy unto thine ene-
 “mies, and an adversary unto thine
 “adversaries.” Hence it appears,
 that the Lord of Hosts is represented
 by the word, the same who is in Da-
 niel called Michael^b, which word be-
 ing

^a Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, 22.

^b מִיכָאֵל quis, ד nota similitudines, לֵא nomen Dei.

ing interpreted, signifies, who is as God, or the similitude of God, or his representative. The same is expressly called the word, who was sent to deliver the people of God from their long captivity in Babylon, "He sent his Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." This could not be a word spoken, for the word is expressly said to be sent, and was therefore an agent*. The same is the Messiah of the Jews, the Christian's Lord, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the word, the Saviour of the world. "The word was

Cum itaque constet Michaelē semper fuisse Judæorum et Israelitarum angelum, eorumque ducem et principem, qui illorum curam gerebat, haud multum dubitabitur quin is ipse fuerit qui luctabatur cum Jacobo, et qui innominatus in Veteri Testamento toties apparuerit. Hyde Hist. Rel. vet. Pers. p. 270.

* See PsAL. cvii. 20. and LUKE i. 68. also ACTS vii. 30—35. Where the voice of the Lord can mean no other than his word, for this voice is called the angel, verse 35, and 38.

“ made

“ made flesh, and dwelt among us (and
 “ we beheld his glory, the glory as of
 “ the only begotten of the Father) full
 “ of grace and truth. John bare wit-
 “ nesses of him, and cryed, saying, “ This
 “ is he of whom I spake, He that com-
 “ eth after me is preferred before me ;
 “ for he was before me”---“ No man
 “ hath seen God at any time ; the on-
 “ ly begotten Son, which is in the bo-
 “ som of the Father, he hath declared
 “ him.”---“ The same was in the begin-
 “ ning with God ; for in the beginning
 “ God created the Heaven and the earth.”
 But “ all things were made by him,”
 the word ; “ and without him was not
 “ any thing made that was made.”

If, when God created the world,
 he created it by his Son, when he
 speaks to men, or is said to be seen of
 them, it cannot mean, that he who

* JOHN i. 14, 15, 18, 2, 3.

never was seen of man^a; should himself become visible, but he who hath seen him, the same hath declared him, for he is his word, and bears his name, and was all that could be shewn unto Moses, when he desired to behold the glory of the Lord; who often appeared unto our first parents, and the patriarchs of old, and conversed with them.

The angel of the Lord which appeared unto Hagar, and said, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude," could not be a messenger of an inferior order to the word, since he declares, that what is done by God, is done by him. And Hagar "called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God see'st me^b."

^a JOHN i. 18. 1 TIM. vi. 16.

^b GEN. xvi. 13. See also GEN. xlviii. 15, 16.

It

It was the same Divine Being who conversed with Abraham, in the name of Almighty God, and who made the covenant with him. The same appeared again in the plains of Mamre, attended with two angels, who afterwards were received by Lot, when the angel called the LORD by Abraham had left them: for “the Lord went
“his way as soon as he had left communing with Abraham.” The same appeared again to try the faith of Abraham, in the offering of his son Isaac, and who, when the father had given proof of his obedience by offering him, prevented him from doing any thing more ^a than what was required of him, which was merely to offer and not to slay him, saying, “lay not thine hand
“upon the lad.” In consequence of this obedience the promise was renewed;

^a See the Author's Introduction to Universal History. p. 62. second edition.

“ in thy seed shall all the nations of
 “ the earth be blessed: because thou
 “ hast obeyed my voice.”

Again, after the death of Abraham, the Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, “ go not down into Egypt,” and repeated the promise made to his father, “ in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” A third time is this promise confirmed to Jacob, the son of Isaac, in Haran, when he had the vision of the ladder, of which the top reached to Heaven, and the steps, for illustrating that prediction, were filled, probably, with his posterity, ascending and descending with Messiah, or the Lord, who actually did descend from Heaven, and was made man; who hath also obtained for us the same glorious privilege of ascending up into Heaven: “ for thro’ him we have both” (you, the Gen-

GEN. xxi. 18.

things, which were afar off, and they, the Jews, which were nigh) “an access
 “ by one spirit unto the Father. Now,
 “ therefore, ye are no more strangers
 “ and foreigners, but fellow-citizens
 “ with the saints, and of the household
 “ of God^a.”

Again; the Angel which redeemed Jacob from all evil, is also called God (elohim^b).

Nor, as before observed, was it any other being who appeared to Moses, for this faithful leader of his people could only be permitted to see him who followed after God, the Angel of the Lord, in whom was his name, I AM THAT I AM, and afterwards JEHOVAH, when he is about to fulfill his promises.

It was Jehovah, the Angel of Jehovah, that went before the camp of

^a EPHES. ii. 17, 18, 19.
 15, 16.

^b GEN. xlviii.

Israel, removed and went behind them when the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them.

The man who appeared to Joshua was no other than Messiah, or the word, the heavenly Prince, and leader of God's people, and therefore Joshua worshipped him. For, "it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain (or rather prince) of the host of Jehovah, am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And

* EXOD. xiv. 19.

" the

“the captain of the Lord’s host said
 “unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off
 “thy foot, for the place whereon thou
 “standest is holy. And Joshua did
 “so.” This is the language of him
 who appeared unto Moses in the bush^b;
 of one to whom divine honors were
 paid, which could not be to any other
 angel or messenger, than the great
 messenger of the covenant, Michael, or
 Messiah, the Son of God: for any o-
 ther angel, like that which appeared
 to St. John, would have rebuked him
 when he fell at his feet to worship him.
 “And he said unto me,” John, “see
 “thou do it not,” do not worship me;
 “I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy
 “brethren who have the testimony
 “of Jesus: worship God.”

^a JOSHUA V. 13, 14, 15.

^b Compare EXOD. iii. 2—6. with ACTS vii.
 30—38.

^c Compare this with REVEL. i. 1.

^d REV. xix. 10. xxii. 8, 9.

The Angel that appeared unto Balaam, is distinguished by the name of Elohim, and of Jehovah; for “ God “ (Elohim) met Balaam”---and “ the “ Lord (Jehovah) put a word into Balaam’s mouth^a.”

The “ Angel of the Lord, that “ came up from Gilgal to Bocham,” where he rebuked the children of Israel, was the same who brought them up out of Egypt, and established them in Canaan, for “ I, says he, made you “ to go up out of Egypt, and have “ brought you unto the land which I “ swore unto your fathers, and I said, “ I will never break my covenant with “ you, &c.---but ye have not obeyed “ my voice^b,” &c.

The same was the Angel that appeared unto Gideon, the son of Johash^c.

He who appeared unto Manoah and his wife, calls himself by the name of

^a NUMB. xxii. 4, 5. ^b JUDGES ii. 1, 2. ^c vi.

one that doth WONDERS, or who work-
eth MIRACLES : for when Manoah said
unto him (the Angel of Jehovah)
“ What is thy name, that, when thy
“ sayings come to pass, we may do
“ thee honor ? The Angel of Jehovah
“ said unto him, Why askest thus thou
“ after my name, seeing it is SECRET ?”
or rather WONDERFUL^a, as it is in the
margin^b. This name is given to God^c;
“ Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah,
“ amongst the Gods, glorious in holi-
“ ness, fearful in praises, DOING^d WON-
“ DERS.” Again^e, “ Thou^f art the
“ God that dost WONDERS.” And in
that celebrated prophesy, concerning
the birth of Christ^g, it is said of him,...
“ his name shall be called WONDER-

^a פלאי. ^b JUDGES xiii. 17, 18.

^c EXOD. xv. 11. ^d עשה פלא, ποιων θαυμασια. ^e PSAL. lxxvii. 14.

^f עשה פלא, ποιων τερατα. See also PSAL. lxxii. 18. ^g ISAIAH ix. 6.

“~~rule~~” Hence it should seem to follow, that the Angel which appeared unto Manoah was the Messiah, and that he was also called by the name of God, for Manoah said, “we shall surely die, because we have seen “God.”

If from the historical books we descend to the prophets, we shall find them often inspired by the Lord, often representing, often speaking in the character of the Lord; and hence it also is, that the Lord, when he became manifest in the flesh, and his disciples, apply many things, as said by him to the Jews in their days, which he had before said to them, the same circumstances occurring by the declarations of the prophets; for “the “spirit of Christ was in them.”

אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, *Savvats.*

1 PET. i. 11

They
chapter of his prophecies; where we
have

They often represent him as the captain, the prince, the leader of God's people. Though Zerubbabel brought back the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, though he was the apparent, the visible commander, it was THE WORD who influenced and directed. The same must be said of Judas Maccabæus and other conquerors. And when the people were to go all into captivity, and their numerous hosts are represented by the cherubim, their leader, the Lord, the Messiah, sat upon the throne over their heads, in likeness as the appearance of a man. The same was afterwards in the court of Persia, influencing Cyrus to promote the return of his people. And the prophet Isaiah after he has described Cyrus, one deliverer of the Jews, proceeds to describe the great deliverer of us all from death and destruction, the suffering Messiah, in the fifty third chapter of his prophecies; where we have

have as exact an account of the life and office, and sufferings, and death, and burial, and resurrection, and success of Christ, as if it had been taken out of the Gospels written by his disciples.

He is the prince of peace foretold by Isaiah in these remarkable words--“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”--for this third child is mentioned after the prophet had predicted the return of captive Israel and Judah. The first child may have been the son of Hezekiah, or of one in his court; the second was the son of the prophet; but the third, with his divine titles, born under the second temple, can be no other than the son of God. He was to be born of a virgin, for it was the seed of the woman, not of man, that was to bruise the serpent's head. He had no earthly father, his father was in Heaven as was he himself; his

* See ISAIAH ix. 1, 2, 3, 4.

body he assumed of woman, of the virgin; but the spirit, which inhabited that body, descended from above. And yet he was, according to the flesh, and according to the law, of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David: and is, therefore, spoken of, by the prophet Daniel, as the son of Man. It is he who came with the clouds of Heaven to the Antient of days, or the eternal God. “ And there was given
 “ him dominion and glory, and a
 “ kingdom, that all people, nations and
 “ languages should serve him: his do-
 “ minion is an everlasting dominion,
 “ which shall not pass away, and his
 “ kingdom that which shall not be de-
 “ stroyed.”

The present state of Christianity is a proof of the accomplishment of this prediction; and as we see so much of antient prophecy, concerning this divine Being already fulfilled, we must not doubt, but whatever more is said of
 him

him in the Old and New Scriptures will be fulfilled also. As that he, by whom God created all things, and governed them; who was the leader, the Prince of God's people in every age, the Redeemer, the Savior of the world, and who was also incarnate, is to be our judge, and to dispense whatever God, in his mercy, shall be pleased to bestow upon his fallen creature man.

In this view then of the person and office of Messiah, we encounter no contradictions, we meet with no insuperable difficulties: God is invisible without parts or passions, it is "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, the brightness of his glory, and the *Χαρακτηρ*, the express image of his substance," who assumed a body, and who suffered^{*}.

^{*} COLOS. i. 15. HEB. i. 3. X. 5—10.

We neither confound him with the person of the Father, nor reduce him to the level of men or angels: we acknowledge all that the Scriptures have revealed of him; and it is very dangerous to advance beyond them.

the Redeemer, who was also incarnate, is to be our Judge, and to dispense whatever God, in his mercy, shall be pleased to bestow upon his fallen creature man.

In this view then of the person and office of Messiah, we encounter no contradictions, we meet with no insuperable difficulties: God is invisible without parts or passions, it is the "image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his substance," who assumed a body, and who suffered.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

OF THE LATTER OR LAST
TIMES.

IF we are permitted to appeal to the Jews for the decision of this question, whether the latter or last times, so often mentioned in the Jewish Scriptures, are the times of Messiah? it must be determined in the affirmative. Kimchi is positive, that where-ever these words “in the last days^a,” occur, they relate to the time of Messiah; and Aben Ezra^b asserts, that by the last times is to^c be understood the end of the prophesy of the prophets. But it would be as prolix as unnecessary to heap up all that might be added to

^a כל מקום שנאמר באחרית הימים הוא ימות המשיח.

See his commentary on ISAIAH ii. 2.

^b Upon HOSEA iii. 5.

^c והם סוף נבואת הנביאים.

what

what Lightfoot, Schoetgenius, Rhein-ferdus, Witfius, and many others have collected from Jewish writings concerning the last ^a days, the future ^b age, the end ^c of days, &c. It is most certain, however, that the last, or, as it is often rendered, the latter days, though expressed by the same words in the original, is an expression often used for a time, subsequent indeed to that used by the person that speaks, but by no means so remote as the age of Mes-siah ^d, which, it is confessed by Houbi-gant and the best interpreters, does not extend to the times of Christ.

In other places, the latter age, or after times, as it may well be rendered, means the period in which the Jews re-turned from their captivity in Babylon.

אחרית ימים. ^a

עולם הבא. עתיד לבא. ^b

סוף ימיו. ^c

^d See GEN. xlix. 1.

In the book of NUMBERS^a, it extends from the reign of David to the destruction of Jerusalem, the last dispersion of the Jews, and the end of their polity and tribes. In DEUTERONOMY^b, the after-times are those which occurred after the captivity, or after that dispersion in which they were idolators. Again, the same phrase in the same book^c expresses the time when God should be provoked against them for their idolatrous practices. In EZEKIEL^d, the days of Gog, whether he is Antiochus Epiphanes or not, is signified by the latter times. In DANIEL^e, the after times, or last days, are to be reckoned from the time of the vision seen by Nebuchadnezzar, to the destruction of the Roman empire, and the establishment of Christianity in the world.

^a xxiv. 14.^b iv. 30.^c xxxi. 29.^d xxxviii. 16.^e ii.

The truth of these assertions appears to me so evident, that I appeal, without any further remarks, to every candid and impartial reader's own judgment, upon the passages in Scripture to which he is referred.

Some have interpreted the end of days and the last times, both in the Old and New Scriptures, of the end of the world; and hence others have expected and asserted, upon any very extraordinary phenomenon in the political or physical world, the final dissolution of it. Hence also the enemies of revelation have taken occasion to ridicule it.

As there is nothing, however serious, or sacred, or useful unto men, which has not been prophanely and unworthily treated by "scoffers, walking after their own lusts," it can be no more an objection against the Chri-

^a 2 PETER iii. 3.

stian, than against natural religion, of virtue and honor, or any other fair and lovely principle, that men who value them not, because they have never practised, or suffered them to influence their conduct, should endeavor to justify their own wicked courses, by reviling those rules, by which, if they are tried, they know they must be condemned. And what aggravates the crime of those, who mock the religion of Jesus, is, that he came to save sinners, to publish an act of oblivion for all past offences, to offer grace and mercy, truth and pardon, to degenerate man: “ For God so loved the
 “ world, that he gave his only begot-
 “ ten Son, that whosoever believeth
 “ in him should not perish, but have
 “ everlasting life.”—“ He that believ-
 “ eth on him is not condemned ; but
 “ he that believeth not, is condem-
 “ ned.—And this is the condemna-
 “ tion, that light is come into the
 “ world,

" world, and men loved darkness ra-
 " ther than light, because their deeds
 " were evil. For every one that doth
 " evil hateth the light, neither cometh
 " to the light, lest his deeds should
 " be reproved^a."

We should not therefore think it any
 reflection upon the Christian Religion,
 that prophane men treat it with deri-
 sion, or that such as chuse to continue
 " walking after their own lusts," should
 distinguish themselves from us, by ne-
 glecting the public worship of God.
 That this would be the case, was very
 early foreseen; and Christians were
 therefore called upon by St. JUDE^b, to
 " remember the words which were
 " spoken before of the Apostles of our
 " Lord Jesus Christ—How that they
 " told you there should be mockers in
 " the last time, who should walk after
 " their own ungodly lusts."

^a JOHN iii. 16, 18, 19, 20.

^b 17, 18.

So far were the Apostles from thinking that the Christian Religion would be so universal, as that every man would profess himself a member of Christ's body, or, that every one, who had professed himself such, would continue stedfast in the faith and practice of a Christian, that, on the contrary, St. Peter declares, "there shall come
 " in the last days, scoffers, walking
 " after their own ungodly lusts." And St. Paul, in his admonitions to Timothy, says, "This know also, that in
 " the last days perilous times shall
 " come; for men shall be lovers
 " of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
 " without natural affection, truce-
 " breakers, false accusers, incontinent,
 " fierce, despisers of those who are
 " good, traitors, heady, high-minded,
 " lovers of pleasures more than lovers
 " of God; having a form of Godli-
 " ness,

“ nefs, but denying the power thereof:
 “ from fuch turn away^a.” And a-
 gain, in the next chapter, he charges
 Timothy, in the moft folemn terms,
 “ to preach the word, to be instant in
 “ feafon, out of feafon; reprove, re-
 “ buke, exhort with all long-fuffering
 “ and doctrine. For the time will
 “ come when they will not endure
 “ found doctrine; but, after their own
 “ lufts, fhall they heap to themfelves
 “ teachers, having itching ears: and
 “ fhall turn away their ears from the
 “ truth, and fhall be turned unto
 “ fables^b.”

What a description, what a charac-
 ter is here given of THE LAST TIMES!
 and if it could be proved, that it fuits
 the prefent age more than any other;
 that thefe vices were unknown to
 mankind till our times, how happy

^a 2 TIM. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

^b 2 TIM. iv. 2, 3, 4.

must every preceding age have been, and how unhappy we “upon whom,” it would then follow, “the VERY ends of “the world are come?” But, in truth, we have no reason to think so extremely ill of the present generation, bad as it certainly is, nor so very favorably of every preceding one, as to suppose they were innocent, and we alone guilty of these abominable crimes, charged by the Apostle upon THE LAST TIMES.

Men have a natural veneration for their fore-fathers, and from a sense of the blessings left by the industry of those who lived before them, are apt to impute greater virtues to them than perhaps they possessed. We see our own follies; they stare us in the face; but we cannot discover the foibles of them who lived before us, and in past times, but by retrospect. Hence it has

^a 1 COR. X. 11.

happened,

happened, that every age has complained of itself, as very wicked and degenerate, and in no other sense to be compared with former times, than iron with gold....But if this was really so, the progression of depravity would be regular, visible, and indisputable; whereas it has been questioned by many, whether there is upon the whole, at any one time, more vice or virtue in the world, than at another time? But if there is any truth in history, there have been periods when the authority of government, the writings of eminent men, the force of striking examples, the influence of equitable and wholesome laws, and the diligent observance of necessary discipline, have not only put a stop to the career of vice and profligacy, but also produced the appearance, at least, of a general reformation.

It is further observable, that these periods have been rendered illustrious

by national successes as well as national virtues; so that in public, as well as in private life, the road of virtue is also the road to happiness.

Whereas, on the contrary, when vice and corruption have been long suffered to over-run the soil, and every successive year has produced a larger crop of wickedness, the fact was not only a token or warning of the impending downfall of every such abandoned state, but a principal cause thereof.

And if every human system does, and must necessarily partake of human frailty, and it follows, that kingdoms are as mortal as those who govern them, is there not reason, as well as authority, for insisting, that the world waxeth old as doth a garment; and that, when it is over-loaded with crimes, it will then be ripe for dissolution? But, “of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the Angels of Heaven, “but

“but the Father only;” and though the disciples are required to watch and pray, “for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come,”....it is not for us to determine of those periods which the Supreme Disposer of all events hath kept in his own power^b.

But it must not be suppressed, that these words of our Savior have no relation to the end of the world, and mean no more than the destruction of Jerusalem; which was attended with such distressful circumstances, as to require that dreadful description of it given in our Lord’s prediction; who seems to have guarded against the application of his words, to the end of the world, by telling his disciples---“Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.”

^a MATT. xxiv. 36, 42.

^b ACTS i. 7.

^c MATT. xxiv. 34.

What

What then are we to understand by the **LATTER OR LAST TIMES**, so often mentioned in the Scriptures? Not the end of the world, but the end of the Jewish state; the times of Messiah, the fulness of time, or end of the dispensations by revelation from heaven. It is the whole Christian period that passes under the denomination of the **LATTER OR LAST TIMES**.

In the first age, God manifested himself by frequent and particular appearance or communications to his indigent creature man, by the personal ministry of his Word or angel, and other subordinate agents. After that there was a series of prophets, “in
“ whom was the spirit of Christ^a ;” “ for
“ all the prophets, says our Savior,
“ and the law prophesied until John^b .”
And, in the Acts of the Apostles, it

^a 1 PET. i. 11.

^b MATT. xi. 13.

is said, "It shall come to pass in the
 "last days, saith God, I will pour out
 "my spirit upon all flesh." What
 therefore can these LAST DAYS mean,
 but the times of Messiah? Was it not at
 the very beginning of Christianity that
 the spirit was poured out? or is it re-
 served with the last vial of wrath to
 be poured out at the end of the world?
 As a further proof that the expression
 of LAST TIMES relates, not to the de-
 struction of all things, but to the re-
 storation of man by the coming of
 Jesus, the deliverer from death and
 destruction, the author of the E-
 pistle to the Hebrews^a affirms, that
 "God, who at fundry times, and in
 "divers manners, spake in time past
 "unto the fathers by the prophets,
 "hath in these last days spoken unto
 "us by his Son, whom he hath ap-
 "pointed heir of all things."

^a i. 1, 2.

It is a distinct period or age, called the LATTER OR LAST TIME, because in it was given the last dispensation or covenant with man from his Maker. In former times God did speak to his creatures by angels, or messengers and prophets, and at last closed all supernatural and extraordinary communication with us, until the second coming of Christ, by sending his Son, who erected a kingdom of righteousness on earth, and made laws, which, if observed, will better promote the interest and happiness of mankind, than all others that ever have been employed for that purpose: and this, our great Legislator, is the appointed heir of all things, our King, our Lord and Master, our Savior and our Judge, before whom we are to appear, and at his hands receive the inestimable reward of glory promised to those, whose consciences bear them witness, that they have lived as became the subjects of

of him, who was without guile, who knew no sin, and who laid down his life for man.

Hence it should seem to follow, that miracles and prophecies are ceased with the life of those, who had the extraordinary gifts of the spirit ; and that we are not to expect any more revelations from Heaven, these being the LAST TIMES: and therefore all schemes of worship, founded on such extraordinary powers or communication, since the delivery, confirmation, and establishment of Christianity, are to be rejected as impostures. And, on the other hand, we should be as careful not to deny the frequent manifestation of God to his creatures in the old world, or before the fulness of times, when the wisdom and power of God were most eminently made manifest in the flesh, by the sending Messiah into the world.

It is said, all events may now be accounted for from natural causes, and therefore

therefore some have presumed, there never was any extraordinary communication between man and his Maker. Because there are no recent instances of miracle and prophesy, they will not believe that there ever were any: as if what does not happen in these latter days of ours, could never have happened at all.

Why these extraordinary powers have ceased, in this last period of the world, has been already explained; the expediency, I might say, the necessity of such powers was evidently superseded by God's last revelation of himself to his creatures, in sending the appointed heir of all things into the world, who hath left us those instructions, those laws, according to which we are to be acquitted or condemned: laws enforced by proper motives, and proved practicable by the conduct of our great Legislator, who shewed himself in all things a perfect example of obedience

dience to them. The precept, it is true, might at any time have been given; but it is example that inforces precept, and this distinguishes the Christian from all other religions.

The certainty of miracle and prophesy appears from the creation of man. Creation must be acknowledged by us, to be an extraordinary exertion of the perfections of God; and, when man was first formed, not having that knowlege, which is the result of experience and habit, it is not to be doubted, but that his Creator immediately, or by means of his Word, or other ministring angels, would inform him of the consequences of his actions, which is equal to prophesy, and yield him such other assistance, as must be as necessary to man, when first formed, as to the new born babe. Nor is it less to be doubted, that an infant world, any more than the infant man, should require the divine interposition
and

and presence. And, as it is incontestably true, that man is a religious being, and cannot be governed without a sense and belief of religion, where is the difficulty of supposing, that the object of man's adoration should be made manifest to him, by some extraordinary appearances? Religion is a spiritual communication between God and his creatures, and therefore it is to be presumed, that God would graciously condescend, some time or other, to communicate himself to them.

We may observe in general, that there was no extraordinary appearance of God in the old world, unless it was to establish and secure the true knowledge, and proper adoration of himself among mankind.

Stiffnecked and perverse as the Jews were, they were the only people who preserved right notions of the Deity; and therefore, whenever idolaters came with superior power against them, it was the
cause

cause of God; and if it is not reasonable to suppose, that he would suffer all true knowlege of himself to be extinguished, and man, who is a religious being, to be deprived of all true principles of religion, is it to be imagined, that he would not appear in support of his own government, against those who pretended to have the assistance of other gods superior to the God of Israel?

During that time in which the Jews were in subjection to the Theocracy, when God was their acknowledged king and supreme governor, it seems not unreasonable to suppose, that he should occasionally have manifested himself to his peculiar people or subjects in an extraordinary manner, not only for their good, but, in its consequences, for the good of mankind; for the preservation of the true knowlege of God, by the peculiar constitution of the Jewish state, by the manifesta-

tion of God by angels and messengers; by such divinely inspired men as Abraham, Isaac, Moses, and others; and after the times of the theocracy by prophets, to prepare the way for the coming of Messiah, in the person of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

The Scripture affords us the best argument for providence, from the early history of mankind, and the several divine dispensations given them: Scripture prophecies, rightly interpreted and compared with history, have been called, not injudiciously, the keys of providence.

We shall build upon a foundation of sand, if we judge of God's proceedings with the old world, from what we behold in these latter days. Circumstances are greatly altered, and idolatry, which was once almost universal, and which seemed more particularly to require an extraordinary interposition of providence, is extirpated from

from the more civilized parts of the world, and sufficient care taken for the conversion of all men by the written word of God.

Let us not therefore become “ mockers in these last times,” nor follow those who “ walk after their own lusts.” Search the Scriptures, and believe that in them we have the promise of everlasting life. Judge not the manners of men, nor the proceedings of providence soon after the creation, from the present state of things. Let every age be considered in its own state, and judged of from its own circumstances, and then such things, as must, from a parallel with the present times, appear most extraordinary, will not seem to have been unreasonable or unworthy divine providence. Some difficulties, after all our care and diligence to understand the most ancient parts of these writings, will still remain: the great distance of our times from those they de-

scribe; change of customs, language, genius, and manner of writing, will ever furnish matter of perplexity to the best interpreters, more especially in such places, where brevity has been affected; and for that reason, almost every explanatory circumstance has been omitted.

But even this should not discourage us from reading these most ancient and valuable records; a privilege our pious ancestors purchased for us with their blood, and of which providence may permit us to be deprived, if we value not this blessing more than at present we seem to do.

Let me have leave to add, that if our times are more corrupt and degenerate than former times, it may very justly be imputed to the great neglect of devotion, and the Bible. Too many withdraw themselves from the public worship of God, from an ill-grounded belief, it is to be feared, that there is nothing serious or important in it; and many
more

more make it their choice to remain ignorant of the Scriptures, from the like mistaken notions of them.

Let me find credit then with some of these Errants in affirming, That whatever things are lovely or of good report, are to be found in their highest perfection there: that hence they may be supplied with preservatives against those equally pernicious extremes, infidelity and superstition: and that by a humble and candid attention to the divine precepts, they can alone be intitled to the divine favor.

To the divine favor we owe every blessing we enjoy: but we must not expect our enjoyment of them to continue without interruption, if we turn our backs on the fountain from whence they spring.

C H A P. IV.

OF SHILO, AS ALSO THE PERIOD
OF TIME, WHEN THE MESSIAH
WAS EXPECTED.

THE good old patriarch, the son
of Isaac, the son of Abraham,
through whom the blessings and the
promises were to be conveyed, Jacob,
afterwards called Israel, because he
had prevailed, and had power with
God and men, the father of all the
tribes, at the close of life, “called un-
“to his sons and said, Gather your-
“selves together, that I may tell
“you that which shall befall you in
“the last days,” or rather, IN SUC-
CEEDING TIMES. “Gather yourselves
“together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob,
“and

“and hearken unto Israel your father.”

The blessings and denunciations of the patriarch, which follow, are prophetic declarations of the future state of his sons, and their descendents: in which it is remarkable, that every image and almost every circumstance, in each of the blessings, bears an allusion to the name of him^b, who is blessed. For as it follows^c, “all these were the twelve tribes of Israel. And this is what their father said unto them, when he blessed them, each according to his blessing, blessed he them.”

The name of Jehuda is PRAISED, HONORED: for, “when Leah bare a

^a GEN. xlix 1, 2.

^b See this finely pursued and illustrated in a dissertation upon this chapter, by the incomparable Bishop Hooper, in his Works lately published at Oxford, by his learned friend Dr. Hunt.

^c Ver. 28.

“son, she said, Now will I PRAISE
 “the Lord; therefore she called his
 “name JUDAH^a.”—And when it is
 said in the blessing of JUDAH, by his
 father Jacob, that his brethren shall
 PRAISE OR HONOR him, and their chil-
 dren BOW DOWN before him: that his
 HAND shall be in the NECK of his ene-
 mies: that he is a LION, stoops and
 crouches as such, and returns filled
 with his PREY: that he should be a
 great and successful PLANTER OF THE
 VINE: that his eyes should be BRIGHTER
 THAN WINE, and his teeth WHITER
 THAN MILK: these, as also the words
 SCEPTER, LAWGIVER, and OBEDIENCE,
 or gathering, have all, in the original,
 a manifest allusion to the name of JU-
 DAH, which, it must not be forgotten,
 IS PRAISE.

The JEWS derive their name from
 this tribe, whose early greatness is at-
 tested by Moses.

^a GEN. xxix. 35.

When

When the children of Israel were commanded by Moses and Aaron to pitch every man by his own standard, with the ensigns of their father's house; when the tribes were encamped under four banners, answering to the four animals in the CHERUBIM, the chief of these was the standard of the camp of Judah; which is first mentioned, which had a far greater number of men under it than was under any of the rest, and "pitched on the east side, towards the rising of the sun."

That the descendants of Judah were equally skilled in arts of peace and war, in agriculture and the management of the vine, is evident from the reproof of Nehemiah, who complains, that in those days, soon after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, whilst he was employed in reforming the offices in the house of God^a, he "saw in Judah some tread-

^a NEHEM. xiii. 15.

“ ing wine-presses on the Sabbath, and
 “ bringing in sheaves and lading asses,
 “ as also wine, grapes and figs, and all
 “ manner of burdens, which they
 “ brought into Jerusalem.” The prophet
 Isaiah, speaking of the house of Israel,
 and the men of Judah, says, of the former,
 that “ it is the vineyard of the Lord of
 Hosts ;” but of the latter, “ that it is his
 pleasant plant^a.”

According to the blessings of the patriarch,
 the tribe of Judah was to be great, it was to
 bear the rod of justice, to have a scepter, and
 a lawgiver : A prince or ruler was not to fail
 in that tribe, under its banner, or from the loins
 of Judah, till SHILO, the peacemaker, or the
 deliverer from death and destruction, should
 come, and to him should the gathering of the
 nations be, or the homage of the nations paid
 unto him.

^a ISAIAH V. 7.

This is a full exposition of the words of this part of Jacob's blessing to his son Judah, comprehending all the different senses, that have been given to the original words, as also the various readings, as they are found in the Hebrew or Samaritan copies of the books of Moses.

In this oracle, Jacob foretells what should happen to the descendents of Judah, from the time of their becoming a tribe, until the entire dissolution of it, which, in fact, did not happen till Jesus came and the Gentiles were called; for then the Jews, having rejected him, were destroyed, they and their city, so as never more to be a people, having a prince, or leader, or standard; so lost as not to have preserved even the distinction of their tribes. This never happened from the days of Jacob till the time of Vespasian, who destroyed Jerusalem, and with it all that part of their polity, which

which depended upon it. So that we cannot mistake in applying this very ancient prophesy concerning SHILO to Jesus ; and yet plain as the point is, we shall find scarce any which have given rise to more controversy.

If we search after Jewish authorities, for the application of SHILO to the Messiah, we shall find the far greater number of them on our side. Onkelos, Jonathan, the author of the Jerusalem Targum, Berishith Rabba, the writers in the Talmud, the Cabalists, R. Salomon, R. Kimchi, &c. &c.—In reading the Sohar, I extracted a most remarkable passage concerning this word SHILO, which mentions several ways of writing it, such as שלה, with the letter ה, and שלו with the let-

^a The numeral power or value of the letters in Messiah, משיח is equal to those in שילה = 358. And according to that species of Cabala called Notaricon, if we take the initial letters of those words שילה ולו they make the word ישו Jesus.

ter

ter¹, and then adds, “^a and here, it is
 “ written, שִׁלָּה with הֵּ, to signify,
 “ that the holy and high name of the
 “ SHEKINAH shall rise with the name
 “ הֵּ.”

The SHEKINAH is the manifestation
 of God's presence, or, more literally,
 his dwelling with men^b. It is to be
 understood of that Being in whom was
 the name of the Lord^c; who is also cal-
 led the Word, and who represented the
 Lord in all those appearances of the
 Lord, or angel of the Lord, in the
 Old Scriptures, and who was after-

“ והכנה שילה ביהודה רמז לשמה קדישה עלאה
 דשכינתה תקום לשמה די :

In a copy formerly belonging to the famous Sel-
 den, now preserved in the Bodleian library at Ox-
 ford, a line is drawn under the word דשכינתה,
 and in the margin opposite to it are these words
 (probably in Selden's own hand-writing) SILO DEUS
 IPSE.

^b See REVEL. xxi. 3:

^c EXOD. xxiii. 21.

wards made manifest in the flesh, and DWELT with us^a.

But whatever the more ancient Jewish commentators may have said, who all apply this oracle to the Messiah, some of the more modern Jews, and others, have denied, that it can be interpreted of Messiah, or that Jesus is the Messiah. To prove then that it is applicable to Jesus, and to him only, it will be necessary to explain, more at large, what is meant by the SCEPTER^b, the LAWGIVER^c, SHILO^d, and the PEOPLE^e who were to be gathered unto him. Now the word which we have translated SCEPTER does not necessarily imply regal authority, or infer, that the person possessed of it shall be a king. The bearing a rod or staff was anciently a mark of power and domi-

^a JOHN i. 14. 1 TIM. iii. 16. and 1 PET. i. 20.

^b שבט.

^c מחקק.

^d שלח.

^e יקחת עמים.

nion or authority; and hence the very same word is made use of to signify a tribe, because all of the same tribe are under the same command, the same staff. Hence, in other translations, it is a RULER, and not a SCEPTER. If it is interpreted as it ought to be of the government of the tribe of Judah, the sense will be, that the republic or commonwealth of the Jews, the tribe of Judah, as a body politic, should not fail, should not cease to be a state, till SHILO should come; and we know, this did not happen till the nations, that is the Gentiles, had acknowledged Jesus, and then Jerusalem was destroyed.

That the scepter of Judah could not mean a king in that tribe, is evident, because there was no king before David, nor after Zedekiah. But, to grant all that can be asked of us, if a king is here meant, and this part of the prophecy was accomplished in Zedekiah, it
still

still remains to consider, I will not say, what is, but all that can be understood by what we read a LAWGIVER; for such a one was not to fail, till SHILO came, and unto him was the gathering of the people.

It is absurd to suppose that Moses is the lawgiver here meant, or that there never was but one only lawgiver; for, from the time of the delivering this prophesy to the Exodus, Israel was oppressed by the Egyptians, and therefore it could never be said, in any sense, that the SCEPTER, and the LAWGIVER, should not depart from Judah, till the days of Moses, who seems to have been the first they had, especially as there was no king of the family of Judah till the reign of David, nor any standard till the order of the tribes in their tents was established by Moses. It is therefore impossible, that SHILO should mean Moses. Nor was he the only lawgiver in Israel. For we are told

told in the book of Judges, that
 “out of Machir came down GOVER-
 “NORS,” in the original it is LAW-
 GIVERS, “and out of Zebulun they
 “that handle the pen of the writer.”
 And when Moses blessed the children
 of Israel before his death, he said of
 Gad, “that he was^b seated in a por-
 “tion of the LAWGIVER.” And twice
 in the Psalms it is expressly said, “Ju-
 “dah is MY LAWGIVER^c.”

He who preserves order, and di-
 rects what is to be done, and pre-
 scribes the limits of right and property,
 is a lawgiver, prince or ruler. This term,
 therefore, is synonymous with that of
 holding the rod or scepter; and, indeed,
 throughout the course of this blessing,
 the characteristical images made use of
 in it are doubled, or enforced by repe-
 tition. After saying, that “Judah is

^a V. 14.

^b DEUT. xxxiii. 21.

^c PSALM lx. 7.

cviii. 8.

“ a lion,” it follows, “ he crouched as a lion, and as an old lion.”--“ Thou art “ he whom thy brethren shall praise ;” and then, “ thy father’s children shall “ bow down before thee.”--“ Binding his “ foal unto the vine : and his asses colt “ unto the choice vine.”—“ He washed “ his garments in wine : and his clothes “ in the blood of grapes.”----“ The “ scepter shall not depart from Judah : “ nor a lawgiver from between his feet “ until SHILO shall come : and unto “ him shall the gathering of the peo- “ ple be.”

From between his feet, is the same, as from his thigh or loins, and means his posterity^a. But, in the Samaritan copies, it is not from between his feet, but his ensigns ; that is, so long as the tribe of Judah had any leaders, or subsisted as a commonwealth, which, as before observed, it is well known to

^a See GEN. xlv. 26.

have

have done till the last destruction of Jerusalem.

It is in vain, therefore, to look for SHILO in any person before Jesus, or to expect him after the extinction of the tribes.

Aben Ezra is of opinion, that David was the Shilo, that was to come; but the scepter or standard of Judah, surely, was in no period more firmly held, or more remote from its departure, than when swayed by that prince. If nothing less than regal authority could be expressed by holding a scepter, such power was so far from terminating, that it may rather be said to have commenced with David. But as it is certain, that a scepter or staff is as applicable to the government of a tribe as of a kingdom, so long as the tribe subsisted, so long the ensign of its power must have remained. But if Shilo cannot be interpreted of David, it will be needless to enquire, with some modern Jews,

whether it may not be applied to Saul or Jeroboam.

Others, as was before observed, have supposed Moses to be Shilo, and that the scepter passed from Judah to Levi, when Moses delivered the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. But besides what has already been said in answer to this supposition, it is certain, that the rights and privileges of the tribes were rather confirmed than destroyed by that great lawgiver.

The modern Jews, rather than acknowledge Jesus to be Shilo, have given that glorious title to Nebuchadnezzar; but no interpretation of the word will favor such an unworthy application of it; nor did the powers of that tribe entirely cease during the captivity, out of which the Jews returned with great glory under the conduct of Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of Judah.

Again, some have conjectured, that by the coming of Shilo is meant the destruction

destruction of a city of that name. But is it possible, that a promise that Shilo shall come at a certain time, can mean that it has long subsisted, but is then to be destroyed, even when it is said to come? and if it is not to be interpreted of the city, much less can it be interpreted of Ahijah, merely because he was of that city; he is indeed often called Ahijah the Shilonite, but never Shilo.

Such absurd applications of the name Shilo, such wild and improbable conjectures concerning it, could never have appeared, if the meaning of the word had been fairly enquired into, or the kind of rod or scepter proper to be held by the leader of a tribe considered. On the other hand, it is very remarkable, that every sense that has been put upon the word SHILO, by ancient or modern expositors, Jews or Christians, will suit the character and condition of Jesus.—If it is derived from

a word that signifies a BIRTH^a, or son; or is interpreted of one to whom^b are all things, or for whom all things are deposited or laid up in store; or the peace-maker^c, or one that liquifies^d and restores all things to a state of tranquility: in any, or all of these senses, the word SHILO may well be interpreted of the Lord Jesus; but as the words before relate to dominion, it is most reasonable to derive this from its true source, a word which signifies not only to rule as a prince, but to DELIVER FROM DEATH AND^e DESTRUCTION; and to whom could this glorious title be given but to Jesus, the Christ, the Lord of life, the Savior of the world, who alone, under his and

שִׁלֹּה^aשִׁלֹּה^b

το ἀποχρημενα.

שִׁלֹּה^c

شیلو

شیلو

our

our Father, is the true SHILO, the deliverer from death and destruction. I have shewn at large the true etymology of this word in a note, p. 6, 7. of an Argument in defence of Christianity, taken from the concessions of our most ancient adversaries, &c. to which I must refer the reader. I then said, I had much to communicate concerning this word, and I now hope, that the expectation of others, if any was raised, is, in this chapter, fully answered. I had made some observations upon the insertion of (,) in words of this form, which it is unnecessary to trouble the world with, since the Samaritan Pentateuch, in which the word Shilo is written without (,), is now incontestably proved to be more authentic than the Jewish copies. I am also assured by my learned friend Mr. Kennicott, that in one of the most ancient MSS. he has consulted of the Hebrew Bible, the (,) is omitted. And I beg leave

to observe, on this occasion, that this is no inconsiderable proof of the utility of that laborious work, undertaken by that indefatigable gentleman, of collating the Hebrew MSS.

But to return from this short digression :---the tribe of Judah was in being, when our Savior came, though it did not, as a state, survive the gathering, or obedience of the people, unto him. God continued the commonwealth of Judah, till he had erected a greater kingdom by calling in the Gentiles : for the word, which, in our translation, is rendered the people, should have been the NATIONS. And our Lord himself declared, that “this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come ;”---the end of the Jewish state, and not the end of the

* MATT. xxiv. 14.

show

world

world—"The Gospel must first be published among all nations"—"But I, says St. Paul, say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."—"The Gospel which was preached to every creature which is under heaven:"—and again^d, "I thank my God thro' Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."—These authorities are sufficient to prove, that if THE END was not to come till the Gospel of the kingdom had been preached in all the

^a MARK xiii. 10.

^b ROM. x. 18.

^c COL. i. 23.

^d ROM. i. 8.

^e The sense of these passages is, that the new dispensation so far differs herein from the old, that the one was given to the Jews only, the other to all mankind: and in addressing the Romans, who considered themselves as masters of the world, the apostle had a right to say, that what was made known to the Roman empire, was therefore known to the whole world.

world,

world, it was not far off in the days of St. Paul.

In this oracle, by the patriarch Jacob, grandson of Abraham, is set forth, the great glory of the tribe of Judah, its pre-eminence and long continuance: that it should not be without a ruler, nor without the jurisdiction proper to a tribe, till the coming of that extraordinary Being who was to restore to men the loss they had sustained by sin, the Deliverer from death and destruction; not that the dissolution of the Jewish state was to take place immediately on his coming. He was to appear whilst Judah was yet a common-wealth, or distinct people; nor could it, according to this oracle, be dissolved, till the Gentiles were gathered, till the nations were obedient unto Messiah the prince.

It was not the design of providence to put an entire end to the republic of Judea, till another kingdom was prepared

pared in succession to it;—till he who is our peace “had made both one,” of Jews and Gentiles, “and had broken down the middle wall of partition between them;”—“and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we have both an access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

Should it be thought necessary, after what has been said concerning Shiloh, to reply to the observations of Monfr. Le Clerc, I am sure it will be very easy. He is not indeed the most able, but he is, of all others, certainly the most extraordinary opponent to the evidence arising from this prophetic declaration of the patriarch to his son Judah, in favor of Christianity. He is even offended with the Jews for their ready and frequent concessions. “It

* EPHES. ii. 14, 17, 18.

“ may principally be objected to this
 “ opinion (of his) that it forces from
 “ Christians a prophesy, which the
 “ Jews have allowed to relate to Mes-
 “ siah, and by which it may happily
 “ be proved against them that he is
 “ come. But commentators are not
 “ to regard what the Jews may grant,
 “ or what may serve a cause, if it
 “ were true ; but what is agreeable to
 “ the truth, even supposing that there
 “ were no Jews in the world, or that
 “ we had no disputes with them about
 “ the coming of Messiah. As the
 “ Jews indeed did not in vain expect
 “ a Redeemer, so all the passages,
 “ which they think, may be inter-
 “ preted of him, from an EXCESSIVE,
 “ and now preposterous desire of his
 “ coming, do not regard him, because
 “ the Jews are of that opinion. That
 “ the Rabbins have, by torturing many
 “ passages in the Old Testament, ap-
 “ plied them to Messiah, without any
 “ reason,

“reason, is well known to those who
 “are conversant with their writ-
 “ings, or the citations from them by
 “Christians,” &c.

It would not have lessened the merit
 of this observation, if the author had
 omitted his *NIMIA CUPIDITATE*; for
 surely the Jews ought not to be
 censured for the most *EARNEST* expec-
 tation of the coming of their deliverer:
 they err in not discerning, that he is
 already come, that all the dates and
 signs, fixed for his appearance, are
 past, and that Jesus is the Christ.

But to examine the favorite inter-
 pretation of this commentator, which,
 he thinks, is not attended with the
 least difficulty, *NE VEL MINIMAM CRE-*
ARET DIFFICULTATEM. של is to be
 read של, and this is to be derived from
 של; and because של signifies, in the
 Chaldee, to cease or finish, for it is
 not found in this sense in the Hebrew,
 though של in that dialect is the bor-
 der

der of a garment, and, therefore, Shilo is HIS END, “ which may be “ applied to the lawgiver, or the “ scepter, or to Judah.”

Is it not amazing, that a Christian should take so much pains to explain away a clear and evident proof of the promise of a Messiah to the Jews, accomplished in Jesus? Is not this derivation of the word Shiloh more forced, and less probable, than any other? But suppose Shiloh to signify HIS END, how can it be applied to the lawgiver, the scepter, or Judah? can the prince, or the emblem of his sway, or his power to make laws, be said to cease, when to him was the hearing, obedience, or gathering of the nations? To avoid this absurdity, Monfr. Le Clerc asserts, that TO HIM means Judah, the remotest noun, and not Shiloh, with which it is immediately connected: nor will he admit of the word OBEDIENCE, though no other sense

sense can be given to the same word in PROVERBS¹; and it occurs only in these two places.

So much critical pains, so much disingenuous conjecture, and so much violence and torture, so to interpret words that they may not be permitted to bear evidence for Jesus the Christ, is scarcely to be paralleled!

xxx. 17.

קרת.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.
OF THE PLACE IN WHICH, MES-
SIAH WAS TO BE BORN.

NOT only the Jews, but the whole eastern world, knew the age or period WHEN Messiah was to come; and about the time that he did come, they actually expected him. This is evident from Suetonius*, Josephus, and Tacitus. The two first apply the VETUS ET CONSTANS OPINIO, prevailing all over the East, concerning the universal dominion the Jews were at that time to acquire, which Tacitus adds, was contained in the ancient writings of their priests, to the emperor Vespasian, who began his reign about thirty-six years after the death of our Lord.

* Sueton. Vespas. c. iv. Taciti Annal. l. xxi.
Josephus de Bello Judaico. l. vii. c. 31.

The same SACRED BOOKS^a informed them likewise of the place in which the Messiah was to be born. When the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, and enquired after the new-born king of the Jews, “ Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. “ And when he had gathered all the “ chief priests, and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them “ where Christ should be born. And “ they said unto him, In Bethlehem of “ Judea : for thus it is written by the “ prophet ; And thou, Bethlehem, in “ the land of Juda, art not the least “ among the princes of Juda: for out “ of thee shall come a governor, that “ shall rule my people Israel^b.” And again—“ Hath not the Scripture said, “ That the Christ cometh out of the

^a Εν τοις ιεροις ευρημενος γραμματιν.

Joseph. ibid.

^b MATT. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

“ seed of David, and out of the town
 “ of Bethlehem, where David was ^a ?”
 [But what is Bethlehem now? where
 are the thousands of Judah of which
 this was one? What is Jerusalem now?
 Are the tribes preserved? Has Judah still
 the scepter and the lawgiver? where is
 its ensign displayed? and who can now
 prove their descent from David? All
 the signs^b of the coming of the Messiah
 are past. If it is said, that Jerusalem
 will be repaired; the temple rebuilt; the
 tribes return, and Bethlehem revive, when
 the Messiah comes; will this strange
 relation account for his being born at a
 place which is not supposed to rise out
 of its ruins, and appear again as one
 of the thousands of Judah, till he has
 conducted the Jews into Palestine,
 who had been driven out of it by the
 emperor Adrian, and forbid to return

^a JOHN vii. 42.
 Sanhedrin. c. ii. § 31.

^b כלו כל הקצין Gem.

thither,

thither, or to any other place near Jerusalem. See Tertullian. And Jerom, in his epistle to Paulina, asserts that from the time of Adrian, to the reign of Constantine, about a hundred and eighty years, idolatry prevailed in Bethlehem, and the statues of Jupiter and Venus had divine honors paid to them, that all traces of the Christian's faith might, by these pollutions, be obliterated.

That Jesus was born in Bethlehem, is acknowledged by Tzemach David, in these words; "Jesus of Nazareth
" was born in Bethlehem Juda, which
" is distant from Jerusalem a league
" and a half, in the year 3761 from
" the creation of the world, and the
" forty-second of Cæsar." In an-

ישוע נוצרי נולד בביתלחם יהודה פרסה
ומחצה מירושלים בשנת אלפים ותשם א ליצירה
והוא שנת כ"ב לקיסר:

other place, a different period is assigned to this event, where it is said,
 “ The Nazarine was taken in the year
 “ 3724.”

The Jews could not deny the period assigned by the prophets for the coming of the Messiah, to be during the second temple, or about the time of its destruction under Titus, nor that he was actually born at Bethlehem Judah; and, therefore, in the Midrash*, they have acknowledged his birth, but under such circumstances as shew they would have been glad to have denied it, if it could have been done without denying, at the same time, the veracity of their prophets.

So much of this most absurd fiction as relates to the name of Messiah, the place of his birth, and his being carried

בשנת ג' אלפים תשכר הנצרי נלכד:

* Echa Rabbuthi, folio 58. 2. The Talmud, Lightfoot, Avoda Sara, and Beraitha Rabba.

away as soon as he was born, the learned reader will find in the places referred to in the notes.

The Chaldee Paraphrase^a speaks of Christ as hidden, on account of the sins of the congregation of Sion. The same pretence is urged by many modern Jews, who will not acknowledge the birth of their Messiah, in the birth of Jesus, nor yet can deny that he must have long since been born at Bethlehem, and do therefore assert, that he disappeared in an extraordinary manner, upon finding his subjects not worthy of his presence.

It is certain the Jews are not idolaters, and therefore it will be very difficult to account for their present dispersion, and long continuance therein, as the punishment of any crime committed by them, without allowing, what cannot be denied, that they re-

^a See MICAH iv. 8.

fuse allegiance to their king, to Jesus the Christ. For without going to Jerusalem, they may be admitted into the kingdom of Heaven, whenever they shall please to say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

It is, moreover, to be observed, that the Jews, however dispersed, are not captives. They suffered bondage in Egypt, and captivity in Babylon, but now cannot be said to be captives to any prince or people; and therefore all those passages which they, and others, have produced to prove that they are captives now, and are in some future age to be redeemed from captivity, are manifestly misapplied, and will, upon a more accurate examination, be found to relate to their captivity in Babylon, not to their present dispersion.

They are taught by all their ancient Doctors, and many modern Rabbi's, in obedience

obedience to this prophetic declaration of Micah, to believe that Messiah must be born in Bethlehem. See the Targum, Aben Ezra, R. D. Kimchi, &c. &c. The Chaldee Paraphrase, or Targum of Jonathan, explains this verse in the following manner: "And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou hast been the least, or too little to be reckoned among the thousands of the house of Judah, from thee shall come forth to go before me, the Messiah, that he may be made supreme governour over Israel, whose name is said to be of old from the beginning of time."

The fifth chapter of Micah should begin with this oracle, which determines the place of Christ's birth, and the former chapter end with the preceding verse, as it is in some ancient versions, and other copies and editions of the Bible.

Bethlehem is, according to Maundrell, a journey of but two hours from

Jerusalem. Here they still shew the grott in which, as they relate, our Savior was born. This is mentioned by Jerom, and before him by Origen, who lived in the second century. “ If any one is desirous of being persuaded that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, by other evidence than what arises from the prophesy of Micah, and the gospel history written by the disciples of Jesus, let him consider, that, agreeable to what is related in the Gospel concerning his birth, the grott in which he was born is shewn in Bethlehem, and in that grott, the manger in which he was swaddled; and this sight is celebrated in places, and by persons who are not of the Christian faith, because Jesus, who is worshiped and adored by the Christians, was born in that grott; and I am of opinion, that before the coming of Christ, the high priests and scribes of the people, on account of the great certainty of the prophesy, taught that

that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem; thus, this saying became universal to the Jews.”

The city of Bethlehem Judah is mentioned in GENESIS^a, and afterwards in JUDGES^b. If it is not in the present Hebrew in JOSHUA^c, it is in the Septuagint, with other cities, in particular, Etam and Tekoa, which are said to have been built by Rehoboam in Judah^d. Jerom, upon the fifth chapter of MICAH, says, that it was also in his copy of the Septuagint; and Reland found it in a MS. upon parchment.

In the Gospel by St. Matthew, it is said, “thou, Bethlehem IN the land of Judah, art not the least;” whereas, in the Hebrew, it is, “though thou art the least.” The sense in both is clear and consistent, for this city, though far from being the most con-

^a xlvi. 7. ^b xvii. 7. ^c xv.

^d 2 CHRON. xi. 6.

siderable in extent of all those belonging to the princes of Judah, is nevertheless, on account of the governor or ruler that was to come out of it, not the least among the thousands of Judah. The learned Pococke, on this passage, has shewn, that the original word may signify either great or little. If it is read as in the translation^a from the Syriac, in the English Polyglot, with an interrogation, it will have the force of a negative, and then may well be rendered, as in the Arabic and Persian versions, and in the Gospel by St. Matthew ; but, if without any interrogation, it will be as it is in the other versions from the Hebrew. Hence it is evident, that the Gospel may be reconciled with the present copies of the Hebrew Bible, without any alteration in the text, which, in matters of evi-

^a The reader will please to observe, that the Syriac is not appealed to ; it is the translation only.

dence,

dence, is not to be admitted. See Houbigant.

Who this ruler, or prince, or king is, that should come from Bethlehem, is determined by the description that immediately follows, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

It is he who so often went forth in the name of the Lord, who conversed with Abraham and Moses, who was before the foundation of the earth was laid, and who at last was made manifest in the flesh, and came forth from Bethlehem, the king of the Jews. Of no other person whatever can it be said, that he appeared or came forth from the beginning, from days of eternity, as it is well rendered by the Seventy^a, he who was afterwards, in some period of time subsequent to this oracle by Micah, to come forth out of

^a Καὶ ἐξοδοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐξ ἡμερῶν αἰῶνος.

Bethlehem as a prince, or governor in Israel, UNTO ME, or before God. These proceedings or goings forth as of old, he was not to give up or surrender, but to give or continue, or to accomplish, until he should be born of the virgin, or until she which travaileth hath brought forth, for then, as it follows, "he shall STAND and feed "in the strength of the Lord;" he who, according to ISAIAH^b, is said "to "bear and carry them (the people of "Israel) all the days of old."

This translation indeed differs from that in our English Bibles, but is much more conformable to the original Hebrew, and the general plan of the divine dispensations towards the family of Abraham.

After his birth, then shall his excellent brethren, and not the remnant

לְבָנָיִם יְתִיבִים

lxiii. 9.

of

of his brethren, DWELL^a among the children of Israel. These brethren were the disciples and companions of our Lord, who are spoken of in the hundred and tenth PSALM, as egregious for worth and readiness. See chap. viii.

The same word is used in GENESIS^b, for EXCELLENCY and EXCELL^c. I am confirmed in the opinion, that this is the sense of the word in MICAH^d, because another word is used for remnant in the sixth^e verse, and repeated again in the seventh.

Let us, however, suppose that the word is here rightly translated rem-

יִתֵּר אֶחָיו יְשׁוּבוֹן.

For this sense of the verb שׁוּב, see PSALM xxiii. 6. "וְשַׁבְתִּי" I will DWELL in the house of the Lord for "ever." See also the Septuagint version of ISAIAH xxi. 12. οἰκεῖ OIKEI.

^b xlix. 3, 4.

^c See also JOB iv. 21. PROV. xii. 26. xvii. 7. ECCLES. ii. 13. iii. 19. vii. 12. ^d v. 2.

שְׁאֵרִית יַעֲקֹב.

nant,

nant, or residue, it is then, in the most literal sense, applicable to those Jews who, being called upon to receive the glad tidings of the Gospel, were received according to the election of grace; and therefore, in every sense, as descendents of Abraham, and as partakers of the hopes of their calling in Jesus, and of the riches of the glory of his inheritance, and as “children
“and heirs of God, and joint heirs
“with Christ,” they may be called his brethren^a.

The Apostle Paul, speaking of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, asks, “Hath God cast
“away his people? God forbid. For
“I also am an Israelite of the seed of
“Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin^b.”
“Even so then at this present time

^a See ROM. viii. 17. also HEB. ii. 11, 12.

^b ROM. xi. 1.

“also,

“ also, there is a REMNANT accord-
 “ ing to the election of grace^a.”
 “ The election hath obtained it, and
 “ the rest were blinded^b.” This agrees
 perfectly with the prophesy of Joel,
 who, speaking of the Gospel-age, says,
 “ It shall come to pass, that whosoever
 “ shall call on the name of the Lord
 “ shall be delivered: for in mount
 “ Zion and in Jerusalem shall be de-
 “ liverance, as the Lord hath said, and
 “ in the REMNANT WHOM THE LORD
 “ SHALL CALL^c.”

It is a good remark of Houbigant's,
 on the third verse, that he, the Mes-
 siah, is said to stand or continue on
 earth, in contradistinction to his goings
 forth from eternity, before he dwelt a-
 mong us. This great Shepherd is said
 to feed or to rule, in the Septuagint,
 is added^d his flock, in the majesty of

^a Ver. 5.

^b Ver. 7.

^c ii. 32.

^d Καὶ ποιμαίνει τὸ ποίμνιον αὐτοῦ.

the name, or in the glorious name of Jehovah his God. This is certainly that great personage of whom God says "my name is in him^a." He is to feed his sheep in the majesty of the name of God, or the glory of God is to be manifested by the great miracles he is to perform, and the high office he is to discharge, as the Shepherd, the Mediator, the Lord, even the Messenger of the covenant, the Savior of the world, who, by Jacob, is declared to be the God and Angel which fed him all his life long, and redeemed him from all evil^b.

They, his disciples and followers, are to abide, or shall be established in consequence of his mission and miracles, and now by their ministry "shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." This was accomplished by

^a EXOD. xxiii. 21.

^b GEN. xlviii. 15, 16.

the swift and amazing progress that Christianity soon made in the world.

Here most commentators close this prophecy, but it should seem from the context, that the first sentence in the next verse ought to be included in it; for it is confused to speak of peace and war at one and the same time, and in the same sentence; to begin with peace, and immediately add, “when the Assyrian shall come into our land, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.” The sentence is complete without the former words, which too much embarrass it, and therefore it must be right to finish the first oracle with these words, “and he, or this, shall be our peace.” If, with our translation, we read HE, it is the Messiah, “for he is our peace.” If with the Seventy and others, we read THIS, it is

* EPHES. ii. 14.

the Gospel of peace, the glad tidings of good things^a.

However, as this great Being seems to be mentioned again in the sixth verse, where it is said, "He shall deliver from the Assyrians," it will be necessary to enquire into the meaning of the two following verses.

Ver. 5. "When the Assyrian shall come into our land : and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men," or as it is in the margin, "eight princes of men."

Ver. 6. "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof, or with her own naked swords : thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land."

^a ROM. X. 14.

If we admit of Houbigant's translation, it is not HE, but THEY, the seven shepherds and eight princes of men, who shall deliver from the Assyrian: but if we chuse to follow almost every other version, this deliverance must be referred to the goings forth of the Word, which he was to accomplish before he was made flesh and dwelt among us^a.

If the reader has any difficulty in comprehending how the same action can be ascribed to an invifible leader, and to Joshua or any other commander, he will find it largely explained and accounted for, in the last chapter of this book, both from sacred and prophane authors.

Since no person whatever was raised up to deliver the Jews, when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar laid waste Jerusalem, and made the inhabitants

^a JOHN i. 14.

thereof captives, in which state they continued seventy years; and as what follows manifestly relates to some future period, I cannot help thinking, that the seven shepherds are the seven Maccabees, namely Mattathias, and his five sons, with Hyrcanus the son of Simon, and the eight princes of the Asmodean race, beginning with Aristobulus, (who is said by Josephus to have been the first who wore the diadem, with his brother Antigonus) and ending with Mariamne, who was married to Herod: For when that cruel tyrant had put her, and her two sons, together with their uncle Aristobulus, to death, that race became extinct.

Now this interpretation connects the several oracles in this and the foregoing chapter of Micah, and leads us naturally, and in due order of time, from the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, to the birth of Christ: for when she which travailed had

had brought forth in Bethlehem, then the goings forth of him who was in the fulness of the dispensations of God's providence to be ruler in Israel, or king of the Jews, were perfected.

It is well known, that Antiochus Epiphanes ruled over Assyria and the land of Nimrod, and that he marched his armies into Palestine, polluted the temple, and trod in the palaces of the Jews. The first that opposed him was the good old Mattathias, whose son Judas was "renowned unto the utmost parts of the earth." He overthrew the forces of Samaria and Syria; he "took their spoils and Apollonius's sword also, and therewith he fought all his life long." The sons of Mattathias, with Hyrcanus the son of Simon, were shepherds, leaders, or generals of the people; but their descendants assumed a regal power, and

^a 1 MACCAB. iii. 9.

^b 1 MACCAB. iii. 12.

are thereby properly distinguished from the seven Maccabees.

^a Hyrcanus the father being dead, Aristobulus, his eldest son, resolved to change the form of government, and was the first who put the crown upon his head, four hundred and eighty-one years, and three months, after the return of the people from their captivity in Babylon.

On the authority of Strabo and Timagenes, Josephus asserts, that this king extended ^b the Jewish territories, and united with them, by the bond of circumcision, part of the Iturians.

^a Τελευτησαντῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς τὰ πατρῶς ὁ πρεσβυτατος Αριστοβυλος τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰς Βασιλείαν μεταθῆναι δοξας, ἐκρίνεν γὰρ ὅτως, διαδῆμα πρῶτος ἐπιτίθεται μετὰ τετρακοσίων ἀριθμὸν ἐτῶν καὶ οὐδονηκοντα καὶ ἑνός, καὶ μηνῶν τριῶν, ἀφ' ἧς τῆς ἀπο Βαβυλῶν δαλείας ἀπαλλαγείς ὁ λαὸς τὴν οἰκειαν ἐπανήλθε.

Josephi l. xiii.

^b Χωρὰν τε γὰρ αὐτοῖς προσεκτεσάλο, καὶ τὸ μέρος τῶν Ἰτυραίων ἐθνὸς οἰκείωσαλο, δεσμῷ συναψας τῶν αἰδοίων περικομῇ.

But

But in this he was greatly assisted by ^a his brother Antigonus, with whom he participated his crown. The kingdom was in common to them both, till the enemies of both set Aristobulus against his brother by their calumnies, when he was basely murdered, and the other died of grief.

He was succeeded by his brother Jannæus, called also ^b Thracidas, on account of his excessive barbarities. This king subdued many cities belonging to the Syrians, Idumæans, and other people. After a reign of twenty-seven years, he was succeeded by his wife Alexandra, who ascended the throne by the will of her husband, and consent of the people, over whom she ruled for nine years with great glory.

^a ---τον αδελφον Αντιγονον ον σεργειν εδοκει, μαλιστα δε και κοινωνον ειχε της Βασιλειας, —

^b δια την της ωμοτητος υπερβολην επικληθηται αυτου παρὰ των Ισδαιων Θρακιδαν.

If it is objected, that a woman is in this account reckoned among the princes of men, it must also be acknowledged, that she was such a woman, as was superior to every weakness of her sex, and more practised in the arts of government than men, who, for want of such knowlege as she was possessed of, often err. This is the character given of her by Josephus. She kept her most ambitious son and successor, Aristobulus, from the throne, and conferred the dignity of the pontificate upon his elder brother Hyrcanus, who, being of a more peaceable disposition, quietly resigned his pretensions to Aristobulus, but some time after, having entertained higher thoughts,

Ἡ γυνὴ γὰρ τῷ ἀσθενεὶ τὰ φύλα καὶ ἔδεν χρησαμένη. δεινὴ γὰρ εἰς τὸ φιλαρχόν ἐν τοῖς μαλιστα γενομένη διηλεγξεν ἐργοῖς τὸ, τε πρακτικὸν τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ γνώμης, καὶ τοῦ ἀσυνέτου τῶν αἰὶ πλᾶσιοντων περὶ τὰς δυναστείας ἀνδρῶν. l. xiii.

contended

contended for the crown, and prevailed.

Whilst Aristobulus was a captive at Rome with his son Antigonus, his other son, Alexander, shewed himself superior to Hyrcanus in Judæa, till defeated by the Roman general Gabinius.

This unfortunate prince was beheaded at Antioch by Scipio, in obedience to an order from Pompey, whose partisans had before taken off his father by poison, because he had been favored by the friends of Cæsar. Antony sent his body to Judæa, which had long been preserved in honey, there to be deposited in the royal mausoleum of the Jews.

Antigonus, by the help of Fabius and Ptolemy, son of Mennæus and Marian, entered Judæa, but was immediately driven out by Herod. He then intreated the assistance of Pacorus, general of the Parthians, who put Herod

rod to flight, and took Hyrcanus prisoner.

The Romans upon this sent Socius against him ; and when the city and temple were taken, he surrendered himself a prisoner, and was put to death by order of Mark Antony, prevailed upon by gifts from Herod.

According to Strabo, cited on this occasion by Josephus^a, Antony did not know any other way of prevailing upon the Jews to acknowledge Herod: For under torture they persisted in rejecting him, out of the great regard they had for their former king.

This act delivered Herod from his fears. ^b Thus ended the Asmonean go-

^a Οὐκ οἰηθεὶς ἑτέρου τροπὸν μεταθεῖναι αὐτὰς γνώμας τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὥς τε δεξασθαι τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκείνῃ καθέστημενον Ἡρώδην· οὗτος γὰρ βασινιζόμενοι βασιλεὺς αὐτὸν ἀναγορεύειν ὑπέμειναν, ὥτως μὲν γὰρ τι ἐφρόνεν περὶ τῆς πρώτης βασιλείας. l. xv.

^b ὃ γε γινόμενον, τῆς δὲ μετ' Ἡρώδης ἀπαλλασσεται· παύεται δ' ὥτως ἢ τῆς Ἀσαμωναίας ἀρχῇ μετὰ εἴτη ἑκατὸν καὶ εἰκοσι ἔξ. Οἶκος λαμπρὸς ὅστος ἦν, καὶ διασημὸς γένος ἕνεκα τῆς ἱερατικῆς τιμῆς, ὧν τε ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐθνικῆς οἱ γόνεες αὐτὴ διεπραξάντο. l. xiv.

vernment,

vernment, which had subsisted one hundred and twenty-six years. A noble and illustrious family, distinguished in its source, and honored with the pontificate, and afterwards by the great actions the ancestors of it had done for the nation.

The almost perpetual contests between the Jews and Alexander's generals, and their successors, continued till the Romans had conquered all those nations; and then was accomplished that prophesy in NUMBERS^a, which foretold the captivity in Babylon, in these words, "Ashur shall
" carry thee away captive;" and the reduction of all Assyria and Judæa, by the Romans, "And ships shall come
" from the coast of Chittim, and shall
" afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber^b." It then follows, "and he (Eber) also
" shall perish for ever," which did

^a xxiv. 22, 23, 24.

^b Verse 24.

not happen till the final destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian.

Let it be observed here, that a chain of prophecy, extending from the days of Micah to those of Herod, or much longer, from Balaam to Titus, confirmed in every part by events, absolutely out of all human power to have foreseen, is such an evidence for the divine authority of these ancient records, as ought not to be rejected.

Dr. Hyde^a endeavors to prove the name of HEBREW to be derived from the passage over the Euphrates; but most of the ancient names of places are taken from the names of men, the EDMITES from EDM, CANAANITES from CANAAN, KESDI or Chaldeans from KESD, CUSHI from CUSH, ELAMITES from ELAM, called by the Armenians SEMZIKER or SEMAKITES, from SEM, ASSYRIANS from ASSUR; and, therefore, I am inclined to believe the HEBREWS

^a Hist. Rel. vet. Pers. cap. 2.

from

from HEBER. If Dr. Hyde's derivation of the name of HEBREW is to be admitted, it will by no means follow, that the word HEBREW in Balaam's prophesy is, as he calls it, EXIGETICUM *τὸ* ASHUR. If the Assyrians are expressed by ASHUR, surely the Hebrews are expressed by EBER: at least this is more natural than to suppose, that EBER means ASSUR or the ASSYRIANS over again, scil. *τὸ* *ὑπερ* UBI EST ASSUR.

The commentators in general suppose that the numbers seven and eight, however particular and determined they may seem to be, are here used indefinitely; only some take the seven shepherds to mean the seven counsellors of Persia. For the first opinion, see Chytræus upon Micah, who says, that the seven shepherds and eight princes, are the princes of the Medes and Persians, who, a hundred and fifty years after Micah, punished the Assyrians and Babylonians, the destroyers

stroyers of the Jewish polity, and put an end to the Babylonish empire; and that the number seven and eight is only a certain for an uncertain number.

According to TARNOVIUS, seven alludes to the kings of the Assyrians and Persians, who had seven princes: this gave occasion to Pocock to make the following remark, in his annotations upon Micah. “What some also think, “that in the naming of seven shepherds, or rulers, there is an allusion “to the number of seven princes and “counsellors of the Persians, mentioned in ESTHER^a, and EZRA^b, “may seem also an observation of “more nicety than much to be insisted on. Vide Tarnov.”

Cornelius à Lapide asserts, in his commentary, that Xenophon has given the names of these princes and kings

^a i. 14.

^b vii. 14.

under

under Cyrus, to whom the prophet Micah here alludes.

Xenophon, indeed, in the fifth book of the *Cyropædia*, describing the order in which the army marched towards Babylon, mentions seven officers, who commanded the infantry. Chryfantas marched first at the head of the heavy armed men, Artabazus led the Persian archers, Andramias the infantry of the Medes, Embas the Armenian infantry, Artuchas the Hyrcanians, Thambradas the Sacæ, and Damatas the Caduvians. But these seven were not all the principal leaders or generals in the army of Cyrus, for immediately after he mentions other *αρχοντες*, princes or commanders, and after them the generals of the cavalry, by name, Madatas commanding the Persian cavalry, Rambatas the cavalry of the Medes, and lastly, the brave and eloquent Tigranes, prince of Armenia, at the head of his own troops. If Xenophon

phon had been more particular, we should have had a much larger list from him; for Cyrus is said to have called every officer by his name, and to have given his orders to every one of them: which extraordinary instance of the strength and readiness of his memory, was matter of surprize and discourse to all, as they returned to their tents. Besides, other princes and officers of great rank are afterwards named, as Gadates, Gobryas, Abradatas, Dabuchus, Karduchus, Artagerfas, Pharnuchus, Asiadatas, and Hyftaspas.

It is evident, therefore, that the seven generals first named are not the seven shepherds or eight princes, or KINGS, as Cornelius à Lapide calls them, nor the principal or chief commanders; for these were Cyrus prince of Persia, Cyaxares king of the Medes, Tigranes prince of Armenia, Abradates king of the Susi,
Gadatas,

Gadatas, and Gobryas, and other sovereign princes.

Pere Houbigant, in a note upon this passage in Micah, refers his reader to Calmet, whose interpretation is as follows :

“ This is our method of explaining it, says Calmet. Cambyfes having entered Judæa, &c. . . the Lord raised up the seven magi against him. He who passed among them for king of the Persians, is called Smerdis by Herodotus, and Oropastes in Trogus, and Artaxarta in Eſdras. The seven magi were murdered by seven conspirators of the chiefs of Persia, who having thus delivered the empire from these usurpers, put one of them, namely, Darius son of Hyſtaſpes, on the throne. These are the seven SHEPHERDS, or eight PRINCES OF MEN established in the land of Aſhur, or in the land of Nimrod, who govern that country with the sword and spear. If we
N regard

regard only the seven magi and seven conspirators, there were no more than seven; but we shall find eight if we reckon MARAPHIS or ARTAPHANES, whom the poet Æschylus places between one of the magi that was slain, and Darius son of Hytaspes, who was put upon the throne. It is also to be observed, that since that time, and perhaps before then, the kings of Persia had always seven counsellors about their person," &c. &c.

This interpretation, which Calmet calls his own, is taken from the old commentators. It is the same with that in Tarnovius.

Against all these commentators it may be objected, that the numbers of the shepherds and the princes of men are not accounted for. To say that these numbers may signify more or less than they really signify, is a figment, not a comment: and to add, that the eight princes of men are no other than
the

the seven shepherds, instead of removing the difficulty, is an additional blunder. If Cyrus the Persian, or Darius the Mede, or both of them, are here understood, they would have been mentioned by their names, as in Isaiah and Daniel, or as kings of the Medes, as in all the other oracles. In Daniel^a, the Medo-persian empire is expressed by a ram having two horns: "The ram
 " with the two horns are the kings of
 " Media and Persia." In Isaiah, Cyrus is mentioned by name; but as the punishment and overthrow of the Chaldeans was not completed by him, it is ascribed not to one only, but to the kings of the Medes in Jeremiah, who says, "^b The Lord hath raised up the
 " spirit of the kings of the Medes—
 " prepare against her the nations with
 " the kings of the Medes, the captains
 " thereof, and all the rulers thereof,

^a viii. 20.^b li. 11, 28.

“ and all the land of his dominion.” Surely not the seven magi, one of whom, according to Herodotus, called Otanes, wisely retired, refusing either to be a tyrant or a slave. The rest contended for empire amongst themselves, and Maraphis and Artaphranes seem to have reigned for some time before Darius, till Artaphranes slew Mardus, and Darius Artaphranes, called Artaphernes by Ctesias, and Intaphernes by Herodotus. And thus he made his way to the throne, and not by the neighing of his horse, and a trick of his groom, which is an idle story. The poet Æschylus does not make the number of the magi eight, as Calmet will have it, by interposing Artaphranes between Maraphis and Darius: he, reciting the Kings of Persia, reckons Cyrus the third, his son the fourth, Mardus *αισχυνη πατρα*, his country’s disgrace, the fifth; Maraphis the sixth, *εβδομη τε Αρταφρενης*, Artaphrenes the seventh

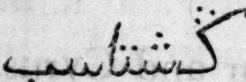
venth king, or fourth from Cyrus, and not a seventh or eighth magus, rather one of the first or principal magi, honored by Æschylus with the character of εὖλας, the good.

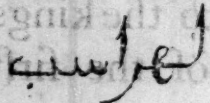
If the seven shepherds are the seven Maccabees, and the eight princes of men their royal successors, from Aristobulus to Antigonos, the Jews may with great propriety be said to have raised them up, as being raised up among them, their countrymen, whom they chose and accepted of for their leaders — “ When he (the Assyrian) shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise up against him seven shepherds and eight principal men.”

On the other hand, the Jews cannot be said to have raised up the seven magi and the eight—and if the word in the original is rendered by, “ They shall be raised,” it will no more agree with the magi than any other seven or eight persons, since only one, and he

the last of the magi, appears to have acted against the Chaldeans; for Darius did not reign till he had taken off the rest of his competitors.

The story of Darius Hystaspes having succeeded to the kingdom of Persia by the neighing of his horse, seems to have taken rise from reading Gheshtasp, which indeed signifies EQUO FACTUS; instead of Ghushtasp, as it is always pronounced by the Persians; HOCQUE MAGIS OBVIUM QUAM VERUM, CREDIDISSE VIDETUR HERODOTUS, VERIORIS RATIONIS IGNARUS: Hyde, Hist. Rel. vet. Pers. p. 305. No Persian author takes notice of any such circumstance; on the contrary, Mirkond, and every other Persian historian^a asserts,

^a Rex in omnibus Persarum et Arabum libris vocatur  GHUSHTASP, filius ٧٨

 LOHRASP. Hyde, p. 303.

that

that Lohrasp, the father of Ghushtasp, retiring from court, resigned the crown to his son. Ghushtasp was succeeded by his grandson DIRAZ DEST, or LONGIMANUS; for DIRAZ, in the Persic, signifies LONG, and DEST, HAND.

It is to be lamented that the most learned Dr. Hyde, who has thrown so much light upon the history of Abraham, and many other parts of the old Scriptures, did not compare the Grecian with the Persic accounts of the reigns of those princes, who ruled over Persia from the beginning of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon to their return.

The Grecian historians have confounded every thing, names, persons, and actions. Jews and Greeks have called generals and governors of provinces, sovereigns.

Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, though great princes, were subject to the kings of Persia. The real name of the first

of these generals, was Raham, or according to Emerkondt, Gudarz, who acquired by his success in war the appellation of Bokht-al-neffar, i. e. the good fortune of victory. He was general and governor of Babylon and Chaldea under Lohrâsp. The son of this governor was deposed by Kirash, Cyrus, on account of his tyranny. Cyrus, on his father's side, was descended from Giamasp, one of the sons of Lohrâsp, having for his mother a daughter of one of the Jewish prophets, or, according to Abul-Pharajius, the sister of Zerubbabel. Bahaman, i. e. the Just and Benevolent, grandson of Gushtâsp, called Ardshir Diraz Dast, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, on account of the extent of his dominions, rather than of any natural excess in his person, which is said to have been very graceful, was born of a woman of the tribe of Benjamin, and married to one of the tribe of Juda. Zerdusht or Zoroaster, who
by

by all the Persic writers is said to have been the servant of one of the Jewish prophets, came to Gushtâsp, who readily embraced him and his opinions, after the thirteenth year of his reign, which lasted thirty six years, and began 519 before Christ. See Hyde, p. 310. also Abul-Pharajius by Pococke, p. 46.

Hence it is easy to account for the decrees from Darius and from Cyrus, in favor of the Jews.

But to return from this long digression; whatever is determined to be the sense of these words, “ The seven “ shepherds and eight princes, and the “ Assyrian ;” whether he is Gog king of Magog, Antiochus king of Syria, or any other person that was, is, or shall be, the oracle concerning the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, is clear and determined, and not to be disturbed by any conjectures about the Assyrian, or the champions raised up against him.

It

It has already been observed, that the ancient Jewish commentators, and many of their modern expositors, interpret this oracle of Christ. But the author of Nizzachon, who claims, by his title, the victory over Christians, in opposition to Jesus as the Messiah, asks, whether God has brethren? because it is said, "then shall his brethren," &c. The friend of God and the companion or fellow of God, may be read in Scripture^a. The brother of God, who is the father of us all, is a manner of speaking never used by Christians; but the Son of God may be presumed to call other men his brethren, and this is all that Christians ever inferred from these words of Micah. It never was a question with Jews or Christians before, whether God had brethren, and it ought never to have been controverted by any Jew, whe-

^a EXOD. xxiii. 11. ISAIAH xli. 8. ZECH. xiii. 7.
ther

ther this passage in Micah is not an oracle concerning the Messiah, and whether he is not here said to have brethren.

The other question proposed by the author of Nizzachon, “whether Jesus “the son of Mary came into the “world to conclude peace with the “Assyrians?” has been already answered. If our translation is right, the peace here mentioned by the prophet, is not a peace with the Assyrian, but with God, with whom men had, by their disobedience, been at variance, from whom they had alienated themselves, and to whom they returned, or were reconciled by Jesus the Christ. If it is interpreted of any other peace before the birth of Jesus, and obtained by the Christ, or since his death, and hereafter to be obtained by him, it is, however, to be presumed to be transacted under his conduct and direction, as a spiritual and invisible guide or leader, and therefore no more an objection

jection against Jesus, than against any other person who may be called the Christ.

Not every Christian, any more than every Jew, has applied these words of Micah in their original or primary sense and meaning to the Messiah: For some have interpreted them of Hezekiah, others of Zerubbabel.

But then no other reply would have been necessary to these absurd misapplications, than this, that neither of these princes were born in Bethlehem, or could be said to have their goings forth from eternity, if Grotius had not wrested every word of this oracle from its obvious meaning, that, blinded with Jewish prejudices, he might apply it in a primary sense to Zerubbabel.

Before I make any remarks upon his commentary, I take leave to observe, that almost every objection to Zerubbabel, is equally strong against Hezekiah, and that the prophet Micah must
not

not be supposed to relate the birth of Hezekiah, a contemporary, born before the delivery of this prediction, when he evidently foretells the birth of a much greater prince, to be born in some future age.

“ Out of thee shall he come forth.” Zerubbabel, says Grotius, is properly said to be born in Bethlehem, *natus ex Bethlehemo RECTE dicitur*, because he was of the family of David, which took its rise in Bethlehem.

Here one would be almost tempted to think, that the Jew had snatched up the pen, and inserted the word *RECTE* ; for how can a man born in Babylon be said to be of Bethlehem? If it is answered, because his family was originally of that place---it must, even then, be allowed to be *INDIRECTLY*, at least, if at all to be said of him, that he was born in Bethlehem. Surely it would rather have been said, that he was descended of one born in Bethlehem,

Bethlehem, if this had been the prophet's meaning, and not that he was to go forth from Bethlehem, who, in fact, went forth from Babylon.

The prophet makes no enquiry after the ancestors of this prince, nor the place of their birth; it is the Messiah, not his progenitors, that is here pointed out to the Jews: He expressly names the city in which their Messiah was to be born, and addresses it as great on that very account, and so it was ever understood by all ancient interpreters.

“ Whose goings forth have been “ from of old, from everlasting”—This, according to Grotius, signifies no more than that Zerubbabel was of a very ancient and illustrious family.—Strange interpretation of an oracle, so hard to be wrested from the Christians, by a Christian, though, in his interpretation of ancient oracles applied to Christ, RECTE DICATUR, a Jewish interpreter.

It

It is true, that these words separately taken have been applied to finite things; but it is also true, that they have been employed in expressing the eternity of God^a. And when they are all brought together, as in this passage, and have the preposition (2) BEFORE, prefixed, they cannot be used for a period of four or five hundred years only, nor can any instance be produced to support the interpretation given by Grotius.

“Therefore will he give them up
“until the time”—God will certainly deliver up the Hebrews into the hands of the Chaldeans. Grotius. I have already observed, that the word rendered GIVEN UP, signifies properly given so as to be continued, or accomplished; and that the pronoun THEM, is to be referred to the GOINGS FORTH, which are mentioned, rather than to the Hebrews, which Grotius supplies.

^a See PROV. viii. 22. PSALM xc. 2. ISAIAH xliii. 13.

“Until

“ Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth,”—till these Hebrews are delivered from their pains, compared to those of a woman in labor. This interpretation is figurative, and therefore not to be admitted, when that which is literal is more agreeable to the context. The prophet speaks of the city of Bethlehem, in which the Messiah was born, that great Being, whose goings-forth, or manifestations have been of old, or from everlasting, and which will be given, continue or be accomplishing, till he is made manifest in the flesh, or “ till she that travaileth hath brought forth.”

“ The remnant of his brethren shall return.” The brethren of Zerubabel, says Grotius, which must indeed be the sense, if the prophet in this oracle can be supposed to foretell the birth of that prince in Bethlehem, who,

as before observed, was born in Babylon, and who went forth from Babylon.

By the seven shepherds also, Grotius understands Cyrus, with the other princes; and by the eight princes of men, "the captains and rulers" of the Medes, mentioned in JEREMIAH*. But this interpretation has been largely considered above, and, I think, confuted; and therefore HE that is said to deliver the Jews from the Assyrian, cannot be Cyrus, of whom no mention is made in the former part of this chapter. In short; the single person named is no other than the "ruler in Israel, whose goings-forth have been from of old, "from everlasting."

To conclude this topic, therefore, the difference between the interpretation I have given of this oracle, and that by Grotius, is, that the former is

* li. 28.

a literal translation of the original, giving the proper and most obvious sense of the words, consistent with the context, and confirmed by events. The other is not a translation, but a paraphrase, in which almost every word is wrested from its true sense and proper application, to figurative and improper purposes. The rules of the language are not observed, the context is disregarded, and the history of events confounded.

I think then I may fairly and safely conclude, that this oracle is applicable to Jesus the Christ, and to him only.

C H A P. VI.

OF THE TWO MESSENGERS IN MALACHI iii. i. THE MESSENGER WHO WAS TO PREPARE THE WAY, AND THE LORD, EVEN THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT.

HAVING thus far traced the course of revelation or prophecy from its source, and having its issue, as it were, in sight, this passage of MALACHI, and the mission of John the Baptist, fall next into order of consideration.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Lord of life. He came to prepare the way of the Lord, to go before his face. His history is a proper introduction to that of Jesus: his

office was preparatory to that of our Lord's: and he bare record, that Jesus was the Son of God.

It had been declared, by the prophet Malachi, that a messenger was to be sent to prepare the way of the Lord. This messenger is called Elijah the prophet: "Behold, I will send you
" Elijah the prophet, before the com-
" ing of the great and dreadful day of
" the Lord^a."

Hence it is orthodoxy with the Jews and the Papists to infer, that Elias will appear again before the end of the world. But this strong expression of "the great and dreadful day of the
" Lord," is always used by the prophets to express, not the destruction of the world, which it no where ever signifies, but the destruction of Jerusalem, either first under Nebuchad-

^a MAL. iv. 5.

nezzar, or afterwards under Vespasian.

The time, therefore, for the coming of the first messenger, distinguished by the name of Elijah, and of the other great person, the Lord, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom the Jews, in the days of Malachi, delighted, was to precede the final destruction of Jerusalem.

It is to be observed, that Malachi prophesied under the second temple, after the return of the Jews from their captivity, and, therefore, his prediction of the coming of a great person, cannot be interpreted of Zerubbabel, or any of the leaders of Israel out of their captivity. The delight of the Jews, the messenger, and the covenant, and the great and dreadful day, the day that should “burn as an oven,
“and consume the proud and the
“wicked, as also the time when the
“sun of righteousness was to arise

“ with healing in his wings unto them
 “ that feared God^a ;” all these circumstances fix the time for the completion of this prophecy, concerning the coming of Elijah, and the messenger of the covenant, to the time when John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus appeared.

It may be recollected, that the birth of John was extraordinary, and distinguished, like that of Jesus, by miracles ; as also, that he was the son of Zecharias, a Jewish priest, who “ exercised the priest’s office before God,” and whose allotment “ was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord^b.”

The character and office of the father, the advanced age of the mother, the miraculous circumstances attending the birth and circumcision of the son, all contributed to the great end of his

^a See MAL. iv. 1, 2.

^b LUKE i. 8, 9.

mission,

mission, setting a lustre upon him, and exciting a suitable expectation concerning him, which was the more necessary, because he was to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make him manifest unto Israel. For “ fear
“ came on all that dwelt round a-
“ bout them: and all these sayings
“ were noised abroad throughout all
“ the hill-country of Judea. And
“ all they that had heard them, laid
“ them up in their hearts, saying,
“ What manner of child shall this
“ be^a?”

No name could have been given to this extraordinary person, that would have suited his birth and character so well as that of John, which expresses grace^b and mercy from God. That his parents, at their time of life, should have a child born unto them, was an

^a Ver. 65, 66. ^b יְהוֹשֻׁעַ or יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, from יָהּ God, and רַחֵם to be merciful.

unexpected favor: "And thou, child,
 " says his father, filled with the holy
 " spirit, and prophesying, shalt be cal-
 " led the prophet of the Highest: for
 " thou shalt go before the face of the
 " Lord, to prepare his ways; to give
 " knowlege of salvation unto his people,
 " by the remission of their sins, through
 " the tender mercy of our God."

Besides this, he has the name of
 two prophets given him; for when he
 is called MY MESSENGER^b, the original
 word is Malachi, the name of the pro-
 phet, who describes him as the fore-
 runner, as one sent to prepare the way
 of the Lord. He is afterwards called
 by the name of Elijah the prophet: not
 that he was actually to be named at
 the time of his circumcision, when
 names are given to the children of the
 Jews, Elijah or Malachi. The truth
 is, both these appellations are expres-

^a Ver. 67—76, 77, 78.

^b מלאכי.

five of the character and office of him who was to be sent. “Behold, I will send my messenger”—and again, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet”—Elijah signifies the power of God, which was as remarkably shewn in the person and appearance, and life and character of John, as of that other prophet in the days of Ahab.

In the Greek copies, he is called Elijah the TISHBITE; and as that word may signify the CONVERTER^b OR RESTORER, it is as applicable to the one as the other Elijah. “And therefore, if ye will receive it, this is the Elias, which was to come.”

It is to be observed, that our Savior here expresses himself with as great caution as accuracy. He knew well, that the Jews expected the return of the same Elias again, who had lived in the days of Ahab. He, therefore,

אליהו

שוב from

says,

says, "if ye will receive it"—and then adds, that "he, John, was the Elias that "was to come^a;" that they were to expect no other messenger, no other Elias than him they saw in the person of John. And considering the humble appearance of the meek and lowly Jesus, he could not have been preceded by a character more suitable to his own than by that of John.

If we compare the character of the first and second Elias, we shall find them very much alike in austerity and sufferings, and calling men to repentance: both led abstemious and austere lives. Both dwelt in deserts. Each had a leathern girdle about his loins: and both were zealous and fervent in reclaiming the Jews. If the one was fed out of the poor widow's handful of meal, the other lived on locusts. If the son of Sirach says of Elias the pro-

^a MATT. xi. 14.

phet,

phet, that “^a he stood up as fire,
 “ and his word burnt like a lamp;”
 the Son of God says of John, that “he
 “ was a burning and a shining light^b.”
 If the former reprov'd Ahab, the
 latter reprov'd Herod. If the one
 was forced to fly from the cruel rage
 of Jezebel to save his life, the other
 was put to death at the instance of He-
 rodias.

But John himself being ask'd by the
 Jews, Art thou Elias? saith, I am not.—
 He answer'd them truly and according
 to their own sense of things, or the
 sentiments they had of the personal re-
 turn of Elias. And if he had said, that
 he was Elias, they would not have un-
 derstood him as speaking of the cha-
 racter, but the person of the former
 Elias. And therefore, when our Sa-
 vior tells the multitude, who John
 was, he no more than John expressly

^a ECCLES. xlviii. 1.

^b JOHN V. 35.

calls him Elias, but says, IF YE WILL RECEIVE IT—which shews he believed many would not....Then this is the Elias, that was to come; that is, they should not look for any other Elias to come than John. It is sufficient that he came according to the account given by the angel Gabriel, “in the “spirit and power of Elias^a.”

The scribes said, that Elias was to come first; and the disciples of Jesus ask their master, what is meant by this saying. And he answered and said, as it is in St. Mark ^b, “Elias verily cometh first, also (και) how it is written of the Son of Man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come.” According to the English translation, in St. Matthew, it is, “Elias shall come first;” but the coming of Elias is

^a LUKE i. 17.

^b ix. 12.

present and not future in the original, though the word that is used for the restoring all things, as a work of time and continuance, implies what shall be done^a. But that there may be no doubt concerning the time, when Elias was to come, it is said immediately after, “ the disciples then understood, “ that he spake unto them of John the “ Baptist^b.”

The prophet Malachi^c, speaking of this Elias, says, “ he shall turn the “ heart of the fathers to the children, “ and the heart of the children to their “ fathers:” and again, the Holy Spirit by Zachariah the father of John declares, that he was to “ give knowlege of sal- “ vation unto the Lord’s people by “ the remission of their sins ; to give “ light to them that sit in darkness, “ and in the shadow of death, and to

^a ἐρχεται — ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα.

^b MATT. xvii. 11, 12, 13.

^c iv. 6.

“guide our feet into the way of “peace.” Thus was Elias to restore all things, and not by a third appearance under a third temple, as if Judaism could be established again with all its ancient splendor, rites and sacrifices, under Christ, before the consummation of all things: mistakes that have arisen from a misapplication of prophecies to future persons, and things, and times, which have long since been accomplished.

The messenger or forerunner in Malachi was to be a prophet; and Zecharias says of his son, “thou shalt be called the prophet of the most High;” and our Savior, that John was more than a prophet. That is, he was a great preacher of righteousness, who cried aloud unto the people to repent that they might be forgiven, and to declare, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

^a LUKE i. 77, 79.

“John

“ John (though he) did no miracle^a,” yet was “ he filled with “ the Holy Spirit from his mother’s “ womb^b.” He was instructed from above, how to discern the Messiah ; but as his office was only to prepare the way of the Lord, and to manifest his coming, and to bear testimony to it, we have no predictions from him of any thing, that was to happen after the effusion of the Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and the destruction of Jerusalem^c. And therefore, our Savior says, “ though indeed a “ greater prophet than John the Baptist “ had not risen ; he that is least in the “ kingdom of Heaven, is greater than “ he^d.” What is expressed by least might have been rendered less^e, that is, in appearance more abject, yet, by being a

^a JOHN x. 41.^b LUKE i. 15.^c See MATT. iii. 7—12.^d MATT. xi. 11.^e μικροτερος.

member

member of the kingdom of Heaven, he has thereby an advantage over John, whose commission was superseded by our Savior's ministry. For John himself says, "He must increase, but I " must decrease^a."

The kingdom of Heaven was declared to be at hand when the first messenger came preaching in the wilderness; and after the descent of the holy Spirit upon the apostles, the information of the inspired Christian must have exceeded his, who was directed to discern the great person, of whom he was to bear record, by the descent and RESIDENCE of the spirit of God upon him, and who, after this, when in prison, sent his disciples to know, whether Jesus was he, that should come, or they were to look for another.

^a JOHN iii. 30.

John knew from the old prophets, that the other messenger, the legate or ambassador of the covenant, the Lord, whom he had made manifest unto Israel, was to do many extraordinary things ; and if we may not suppose him to have done it for his own satisfaction, as he could not in prison be an eye-witness of the miracles of our Lord ; at least to satisfy his disciples, beyond all doubt, that Jesus was the deliverer they expected, he sent two of them to ask of Jesus himself, “ Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ? ” Our Lord, who well understood the design of this message, answered and said, “ Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to

P

“ them.”

“ them.” And these works our Saviour calls a greater witness than that of John ^a.

He had been witness to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus; but the RESIDENCE of that Spirit was to be proved by the miracles which Jesus wrought, and of which John, who was in prison, could not be an evidence. He had heard a voice from heaven, proclaiming Jesus to be the beloved Son of God: but, to complete the character of the Messiah, it was necessary that he should accomplish all that had been said of him by the prophets. And nothing could be more natural than for John, who found himself DECREASING, to enquire whether Jesus INCREASED; whether the Spirit REMAINED upon him, and enabled him to accomplish the glorious works foretold of Messiah in the old Scriptures.

^a JOHN V. 36.

After

After this message, our Savior asks the people concerning John, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" that is, not a reed shaken with the wind, no trifling, mean, wavering, or inconstant object, but one employed on a message of great importance, steady, upright, and consistent in his testimony. "But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings houses." It was not to gaze at the splendid appearance of such as frequent the courts of princes, that they went into the wilderness to hear and contemplate the message of a man, plain indeed in his appearance, but who by the austerity of his life, and sanctity of his manners, and diligence in performing the commission which he had received from above, drew the regard of the whole people. "But

“ what went ye out to see ? a prophet ?
 “ yea, I say unto you, and more than
 “ a prophet. For this is he of whom it
 “ is written, Behold, I send my mes-
 “ senger before thy face, which shall
 “ prepare thy way before thee. Veri-
 “ ly I say unto you, Among them that
 “ are born of women, there hath not
 “ arisen a greater than John the Bap-
 “ tist .” From these last words it is
 evident, that our Lord did not intend
 the least derogation of John, his fore-
 runner and witness, when he asked
 the people, whether they went into the
 wilderness to see a reed shaken with the
 wind.

The ministry of John was prepara-
 tory to that of Jesus. He was to lead
 our feet into the way of peace ; he was
 to proclaim the kingdom of heaven :
 and therefore he who was inferior in
 other respects to John, must have ad-

* MATT. xi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. vanced

vanced beyond him, and therefore be greater than him, if a member of the kingdom of heaven.

John was “ the voice of one crying
“ in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way
“ of the Lord, make his paths straight.”
In consequence of this proclamation,
“ John did baptize in the wilderness,
“ and preach the baptism of repentance
“ for the remission of sins ^a.” He called
upon his countrymen to repent, that
they might be forgiven, and be baptiz-
ed with water; signifying that they,
who sincerely repented, were washed
from their sins.

Baptism with water was a very an-
cient practice in many nations. Water
had ever been considered as a symbol
of purity; and aspersion or sprinkling
had long been the method of initiation
in many nations; in ^b Ægypt, in Persia,
and

^a MARK i. 3, 4.

^b Nationes extraneæ—sacris quibusdam per lava-
crum initiantur Isidis alicujus aut Mithræ, ipsos
etiam

and among the Jews, who baptized their proselytes. Nor is it probable that John used any other method, considering the numbers that “ went out
 “ unto him, all the land of Judea, and
 “ they of Jerusalem, and were all bap-
 “ tized of him in the river of Jordan,
 “ confessing their sins :.”—By this act they became his disciples ; for baptism is a rite of initiation, and a mark of discipleship : and as John proclaimed not himself, but Jesus, when two of his disciples heard him, looking upon Jesus, as he walked, say, “ Behold the
 “ Lamb of God, they followed him ^b.

etiam deos suos lavationibus efferunt. Cæterum villas, domos, templa, totasque urbes aspergine circumlatæ aquæ expiant passim, &c. Tertull. de Baptismo.

Apuleius, who was initiated into the mysteries of Isis, says, *Sacerdos stipatum me religiosâ cohorte deducit ad proximas balneas ; et prius sueto lavacro traditum, præfatus Deum veniam, purissime CIRCUMRORANS abluit. lib. ix. Metamorph.*

^a MARK i. 5.

^b JOHN i. 36, 37.

“ One

“ One of the two which heard John
 “ speak, and followed him, was An-
 “ drew, Simon Peter’s brother. He
 “ first findeth his own brother Simon,
 “ and saith unto him, We have found
 “ the Messias—And he brought him to
 “ Jesus.”

The reason John himself assigns for his own mission and baptism is this—
 “ That he, Jesus, might be made ma-
 “ nifest to Israel, therefore am I come
 “ baptizing with water.” He declares
 at the same time, “ And I knew him
 “ not.”

Though the mother of Jesus was related to Elizabeth the mother of John ; though she visited her in the mountain about the time of her own conception, and before the birth of John, it does not appear, nor is it probable, that there was any intimacy, any correspondence between Jesus and his fore-runner. On

the contrary, it is expressly said, that John “was in the deserts till the day “of his shewing unto Israel.”^a He went not into any of the great cities, but when he left the place where his father lived, he withdrew from mankind, and retired into the wilderness, and lived a most austere life, feeding upon locusts, real locusts, and wild honey, that his character might be suited to his office, a preacher of repentance.

The Levites could not serve nor be numbered, according to the law of Moses and the example of David, till they were thirty years old^b. The Jews therefore would not have received any doctrines from John or Jesus, if they had entered sooner than they actually did, upon their ministry.—Hence it is evident there could be no collusion,

^a LUKE i. 80.

^b NUMB. iv. 3. 1 CHRON. xxxiii. 3.

no contrivance, no familiarity between the first and second messenger ; the messenger, that was to prepare the way, and the ambassador, that was to bring the covenant.

The evidence of John is to be admitted, as he was a mortified preacher of repentance, and had no other view beyond that of manifesting the Messiah unto Israel ; after which, as he himself declared unto his disciples, he was to decrease^a: “ A man can receive
“ nothing, except it be given him from
“ heaven. Ye yourselves bear me
“ witness, that I said—I am not the
“ Christ, but that I am sent before
“ him—He must increase, but I must
“ decrease.”

It is absurd to imagine that any man could be prevailed on to lead the austere life of John till thirty years of age, that he might impose upon the

^a JOHN iii. 27, 28, 30.

world by giving a title to another man, which would lessen his own character and consequence. And if he had no desire of deceiving others, it is not possible that he should be deceived himself, and therefore his evidence is true. “ I knew him not, says John; “ but he that sent me to baptize with “ water, the same said unto me, Upon “ whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the “ same is he which baptizeth with the “ Holy Spirit :” and having seen ^b, after he had baptized Jesus, the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost, as it were a dove, descending upon him, and heard a voice from heaven, which said, “ Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I

^a JOHN i. 33.

^b The order of the words in this passage, LUKE iii. 21, 22. requires the sense here given to them; for Jesus was baptized and did pray; and having been baptized and having prayed, the heavens were open, and the Holy Spirit descended.

“ am

“ am well pleased ;” he could not but believe what he had seen and heard— He therefore says, “ I saw, and bear “ record that this is the Son of God .” And if he did not seal this testimony with his blood, he nevertheless died a martyr to the truth, preferring virtue to life, and thus honorably closed his office as converter, his character as Elias in reproving Herod, “ ^b who feared John, “ knowing he was a just man, and “ holy.” And when he “ heard of the “ fame of Jesus, he was perplexed, “ and said unto his servants, This is “ John the Baptist; he is risen from “ the dead, and therefore mighty “ works do shew forth themselves in “ him .”

If we reflect upon the number of people who followed John, and were baptized by him ; and the regard they

^a JOHN i. 34.

^b MARK vi. 20.

^c MATT. xiv. 1, 2;

expressed for him before and after his execution ; and yet no sect produced in consequence of such belief and baptism, it will afford a very good argument in favor of the superior power, dignity, character, and office of Jesus.

The people in general believed that John was a prophet, and therefore the chief priests and elders did not dare to answer the question put to them by our Savior concerning the baptism of John, “ Whether it was from heaven, or of “ men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, from “ heaven ; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? and if we say, “ of men, all the people will stone “ us .”

And thus the excellent character of John, even amongst the Jews themselves, is such an argument in proof of his inte-

LUKE XX. 1, 4, 5, 6.

grity,

grity, as will make it much more reasonable to admit than reject the testimony he gave, that **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.**

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

OF THE BIRTH AND CHARACTER, THE
LIFE AND DEATH, OF THE MES-
SIAH, PREDICTED BY ISAIAH,
LII. 13—15. LIII.

THIS most celebrated oracle contains a summary of the birth, and life and death of Christ, and of the consequences of his death to himself and his followers. In this short, but comprehensive view of the mission and office of the Messiah, we behold as in a mirror, his humiliation, sufferings, intercession, death, and glorious exaltation.

From lii. 13. to the end of liii. is an epitome of all the evangelists have recorded of their master, Jesus the Christ, the Savior of the world.

The prophet speaks not here in his own name, but in the name of God,
who

who inspired him : and the sacred oracle begins with calling the Messiah, " My servant," the servant of the living God. He shall deal prudently or prosper, and his name be known to the uttermost ends of the world ; " He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

By his sufferings, " his visage and his form was marred."

" He shall sprinkle" with the dew of his doctrines and with baptism, " many nations."

" Kings shall shut their mouths," or be silent, thro' astonishment, when his miracles and doctrines are related ; " for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider."

Yet had the prophets reason to complain of the incredulity of the Jews, and to ask, " Who hath believed our report ? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ?" or who hath

hath acknowledged the strength and power of God in the mission of Christ? For he did not appear with the glorious splendor of the Son of God, but as a man, and in such circumstances as to become an example to his followers, to all the world, of every virtue, every precept that he delivered. He was the only perfect character that ever appeared in a human form ; and the only legislator that set the first example to all his laws. He was to grow up before the Lord, in his presence, and as his servant ; not with the strength and vigor and comeliness of one that descended from David, whilst the lineage of that prince was in its glory, but in its decline : not like a tree in a rich and fertile soil, but as it were, “ a
 “ tender plant, and as a root out of a
 “ dry ground :” and therefore, “ when
 “ we shall see him, there is no beauty,
 splendor or magnificence in his appearance, “ that we should desire him :”
 in

in this respect unlike to Moses, who was distinguished by the brightness or glory of his countenance. He was lowly and meek, and suffered many bitter afflictions. “ He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;” suffered the infirmities of grief and sorrow which we inflicted, and also took away the like infirmities from others, “ for he healed all that were sick.” “ He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord

^a MATT. viii. 16, 17.

^b 1 PET. ii. 24, 25.

Q

“ hath

“ hath laid on him the iniquity of us
 “ all.” He is our peace, the prince of
 peace, who hath reconciled us unto
 our God. We had forsaken God and
 his laws. We were disobedient, and as
 criminals could not expect to be acquit-
 ted by the laws we had transgressed.
 As sinners, we were to expect the wages
 of sin, which is death. But Jesus the
 Savior, the true shepherd, has brought
 us back, and in consequence of his
 sufferings, and most perfect obedience,
 he is to dispense, and we are to receive
 from him, the undeserved mercy of his
 Father, which sin and the law with-
 out the interposition of divine grace or
 favor would justly have deprived us of.

This prophet then proceeds in the
 history of the Messiah ; relates his fur-
 ther sufferings, the most particular and
 remarkable circumstances of his death
 and burial, and his glorious exaltation.

“ He was oppressed and he was af-
 “ flicted, yet he opened not his mouth:

“ he is brought as a lamb to the
 “ slaughter, and as a sheep before her
 “ shearers is dumb, so he openeth not
 “ his mouth.” “ Jesus, the Lamb of God,
 “ before Pilate held his peace ^a. When
 “ he was accused of the chief priests
 “ and elders, he answered nothing ^b.”
 “ He was taken away by violence or
 “ unjust judgment,” as it is translated
 by Houbigant ^c.

^a MATT. xxvi. 63.

^b MATT. xxvii. 12, 13, 14.

^c *Per violenta judicia sublatu8 est.* The difficulty attending this translation is that מ does not signify BY, nor עֶזֶר VIOLENCE. The difference in this verse, between the printed Hebrew text and the ancient copies used by the Seventy, and by the author of the book of Acts, is only this; the former reads the ך as the first letter of the word מִשְׁפָּט, and the others as if it was the last letter of the preceding word מֵעֶזֶר. In the latter case, the sense will be—Through his affliction, i. e. “ In his humiliation he was taken from judgment.”—Dr. Kennicot will inform us whether any copies now read ב for מ prefixed to עֶזֶר: but the most learned Pocock was of opinion, that the sense might be reconciled without any such various reading. Sic omnia optime convenient etiam NON VARIATA LECTIOE. See Not. Miscell. cap. 4. in fin.

Who will meditate and discourse of the miracles, as it is in the Chaldee paraphrase, or more generally, of all the events relating to the Messiah in that age or generation in which he lived? “For he was cut off out of the “land of the living, and for the transgression of my people was he stricken;” or, as it is truly rendered in the margin of the English Bible, “the stroke was upon him.”

“And he made his grave with “wicked men,” on mount Calvary, where vile offenders suffered, “and “his monument or sepulchre with the “rich man,” Joseph of Arimathea, tho’ “he had done no violence, neither “was any deceit in his mouth:” or as St. Peter expresses it, “Who did no “sin, neither was guile found in his “mouth.” That this is the true rendering of this verse, shall be proved when

I proceed to a more critical examination of the words of this famous oracle.

“ Yet it pleased the Lord to
 “ bruise him, he hath put him to
 “ grief. When thou shalt make him
 “ soul an offering for sin,” after his
 death or sacrifice, “ he shall see his
 “ seed,” his disciples and followers,
 the produce of that single grain, to
 which Jesus compared himself when he
 said, “ Except a corn of wheat fall in-
 “ to the ground, and die, it abideth
 “ alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth
 “ much fruit ^a.” “ And I, if I be
 “ lifted up from the earth, will draw
 “ all men unto me ^b.”

“ He shall prolong his days”
 “ Christ being raised from the dead,
 “ dieth no more; death hath no more
 “ dominion over him: for in that he
 “ died, he died unto sin once; but in
 “ that he liveth, he liveth unto God ^c.

^a JOHN xii. 24.

^b Ver. 32.

^c ROM. vi. 9, 10.

“ And the pleasure of the Lord shall
 “ prosper in his hand. ”— The good
 pleasure or will of God was prosperous
 by the sudden and amazing growth of
 Christianity in the world.

“ He shall see of the travel of his
 “ soul, and shall be satisfied.”—The
 success he shall behold of his mission,
 the glorious consequences of his hu-
 miliation, sorrow and sufferings, shall
 give him great pleasure. “ By his
 “ knowledge shall my righteous ser-
 “ vant,” the same mentioned at the
 beginning of this oracle ^a, “ justify
 “ many; for he shall bear their iniqui-
 “ ties.” He communicated his Fa-
 ther’s will to men, and saved them by
 taking away the consequence of sin,
 which was death, and by opening unto
 them the way to incorruption and eter-
 nal life. “ Therefore will I divide him
 “ a portion with the great, and he

^a ISAIAH lii. 13.

“ shall divide the spoil with the strong.
 “ He shall rule in the midst of his
 “ enemies, and subdue and convert
 “ the chiefs of many countries^a.” Kings
 were to be subject to his laws, who
 “ must reign till God hath put all ene-
 “ mies under his feet^b.”

The reason of this power and autho-
 rity and dominion is said to be, “ be-
 “ cause he hath poured out his soul
 “ unto death :” “ who for the joy that
 “ was set before him, endured the
 “ cross, despising the shame, and is
 “ set down on the right hand of the
 “ throne of God^c.”

“ And he was numbered with the
 “ transgressors.” “ This that is writ-
 “ ten, said Jesus, must yet be accom-
 “ plished in me, And he was reckoned
 “ among the transgressors: for the
 “ things concerning me have an
 “ end^d.”

PSAL. CX. 2, 6.

^c HEB. XII. 2.

^b I COR. XV. 25.

^d LUKE XXII. 37.

“ And he bare the sin of many ;
 “ and made intercession for the trans-
 “ gressors.”—“ Then said Jesus, Father,
 “ forgive them, for they know not what
 “ they do .”

Who can read this oracle, and not allow Isaiah to have been, what he is sometimes called, the Evangelical prophet? Is not this prophecy in every part as applicable to Jesus, as is the account given of him by the holy evangelists? Could it have been expressed in stronger or clearer terms, if written after the event? And yet it was delivered above 700 years before the birth of Jesus. But if this is denied, as some will deny all, that cannot be demonstrated with more certainty than the nature of these things will admit of, it is however undeniable, that this prediction was extant in our Savior's time, because he refers expressly to it,

LUKE xxiii. 34.

as

as foretelling what was to happen to him ; and it was impossible for him or his disciples, by any contrivance whatever, to have made his birth and life, and character and office, his death and burial, and the glorious consequences of his sufferings and death, so exactly correspond with the oracle delivered by Isaiah. His birth did not depend upon his disciples ; that he was born of Mary, espoused to Joseph, of that honorable lineage from which the Messiah was expected, though in low circumstances, or that he was, in the words of Isaiah, “ a tender plant, a root “ out of a dry ground,” was certainly true. That he should be numbered with the transgressors ; that he should, though perfectly innocent, die as a criminal, on the spot where the most wicked offenders suffered ; and that he should be laid in the monument or sepulchre of a certain rich man, were circumstances that could not be fore-

foreseen by any not endued with the gift of prophesy. But that he should come to life again after he was dead and buried, by which he confirmed his mission, and gave a proof to the senses of a resurrection from the dead ;— that he should see his disciples or seed, and be satisfied with the great success of his labors, after his soul had been made an offering for sin : And lastly, that he should have dominion and rule, because he had poured out his soul unto death ; these are circumstances so peculiar to Jesus the Christ, that they cannot be applied to any other being ; and are of that extraordinary nature, as to have been utterly unimaginable, if they had not been verified in him.

Before I proceed in my argument, I beg leave to interrupt the course of it, by a remark of some consequence, that naturally offers itself upon this occasion.

Though

Though all contained in this oracle of Isaiah is made plain, by comparing events with the prediction ; how inexplicable must it have been before the completion of it in Jesus ? And can our adversaries produce an objection against any part of these ancient books with half that appearance of difficulties, as this passage must have been incumbered with, before it was cleared up by events ? Now, the inference I would draw from my remark, is this ; That the captious ought to suspend their censures of some dark passages in the prophets at present, since one of the most obscure and perplexed is by events, in the due dispensation of providence, made so clear and intelligible, that he that runs may read and understand it. . . . And the use I would beg leave to make of it, is to recommend to their second thoughts this very evidence, once so perplexed and obscure, now so manifest, which on the
one

one hand has not been weakened by all the Jews have been able to bring against it, and which has been powerful enough on the other, to make some extraordinary converts.

In the gospel age, “ a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure,” was by an application of the history of Jesus to this prophecy concerning the Messiah, in Isaiah liii. converted and baptized by Philip*.

The Ethiopian indeed seems to have been a religious man, for “ he had come to Jerusalem to worship;” and when Philip came near his chariot, he “ heard him read the prophet Isaiah. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb

* Acts viii. 27, &c.

“ dumb

“ dumb before the shearer, so opened
 “ he not his mouth. In his humilia-
 “ tion his judgment (or right) was ta-
 “ ken away : and who shall declare
 “ his generation ? for his life is taken
 “ away from the earth.”

This transaction happened after the death of Stephen and before the conversion of Saul : it is therefore most probable, that the eunuch, during his stay at Jerusalem, had heard of the death of Jesus, and been informed of such circumstances of his life, as might enable him to form a right judgment of Philip’s discourse, when “ he began
 “ at the same Scripture, and preached
 “ unto him Jesus.”

A more extraordinary instance of the power and efficacy of this oracle, in converting unbelievers, cannot, perhaps, be given than in the case of that prodigy of wit, frolick and immorality, WILMOT Earl of Rochester. They, who are acquainted only with his detestable

testable poems and dissolute life, will scarcely imagine, that he died a sincere penitent, and a Christian, and that, before he expired, he made no bad comment upon some parts of this prophecy.

Take the following account therefore, in Bishop Burnet's own words.

“ He said (to Bishop Burnet) Mr.
 “ Parsons, in order to his conviction, read
 “ to him the liiid chapter of the pro-
 “ phesy of Ifaiah, and compared that
 “ with the history of our Savior's passion,
 “ that he might there see a prophecy
 “ concerning it, written many ages be-
 “ fore it was done; which the Jews
 “ that blasphemed Jesus Christ, still
 “ kept in their hands as a book di-
 “ vinely inspired. He said to me—
 “ That, as he heard it read, he felt
 “ an inward force upon him, which
 “ did so enlighten his mind, and con-
 “ vince him, that he could resist it no
 “ longer: for the words had an au-
 “ thority,

"thority, which did shoot like rays
 "or beams in his mind, so that he
 "was not only convinced by the rea-
 "sonings, he had about it, which sa-
 "tisfied his understanding, but by a
 "power, which did so effectually con-
 "strain him, that he did ever after
 "as firmly believe in his Savior, as if
 "he had seen him in the clouds. He
 "had made it be read so often to him,
 "that he had got it by heart: and
 "went through a great part of it in
 "discourse with me, with a sort of
 "heavenly pleasure, giving me his re-
 "flections upon it. Some few I re-
 "member; Who hath believed our re-
 "port? Here, he said, was foretold
 "the opposition the Gospel was to
 "meet with from such wretches as he
 "was. He hath no form or comeli-
 "ness; and when we shall see him,
 "there is no beauty, that we should
 "desire him. On this he said, The
 "meanness of his appearance and per-
 "son,

“son, has made vain and foolish people
 “disparage him, because he came
 “not in such a fool’s coat as they
 “delight in. What he said on the
 “other parts, I do not, says the Bishop,
 “well remember.”

It were to be wished, that this short account of that nobleman by this learned prelate, was in the hands of all who have any doubts about religion, natural or revealed. And I will venture to recommend it as an excellent antidote against the Philosophical works of a late noble author, whose objections have not more weight, though less wit, than those of his predecessor in infidelity.

But it is now time to hear what the adversary has to object against this evidence from prophecy, in favor of Jesus. Nothing worthy notice has been said by others, but what has been better said by the Jews themselves, from whose writings every material of this sort is borrowed.

borrowed. But in the present case, the Jews are so divided, as to confute themselves; for the notion of one Rabbi is overthrown by the conceit of another. It seems they could see and expose each other's weakness, and yet refuse their assent to the clearest and strongest evidence, that could by their own prophets be laid before them.

R. Saadia Hagaon applies this oracle of Isaiah to Jeremiah: but A-ben Ezra, who acknowledges that many have interpreted it of the Messiah, censures Saadia for his opinion, and asks, "in what sense could mention be made of Jeremiah after the consolations and before them?"

Abarbanel is more particular in his reply. "I do not indeed see, says

כי מה טעם להזכיר ירמיה' אחר הנחמות ולפני
הנחמות:

R

" he,

" he, how any one verse can be in-
 " terpreted of him. How can it be
 " said of Jeremiah, " He shall be
 " extolled and be very high?" Or
 " this--" Kings shall shut their mouths
 " at him," in an age when they were
 " accustomed to prophets. Again,
 " how can it be said of him---" He
 " hath borne our infirmities and carried
 " our sorrows, and we are healed with
 " his stripes. The Lord hath laid on
 " him the iniquities of us all"----as

" באמת אני רואה אפילו פסוק אחד שיורה עליו
 אמתתו כי איך יפורש על ירמיהו ירום ונשא וגבה
 מאד ופסוק עליו יקפצו מלכים פיהם כי הנה
 הנביאים היו מורגלים באותם הזמנים ואיך
 יאמר עליו אכן חליינו הוא נשא ומכאובינו סבלם
 ובחבורתו נרפא לנו וכן וה' הפגיע בו את עון כלנו
 כאלו הוא קבל העונש כלו ויש ראלהיו נקיים גם
 מפשע עמי נגע למו וכן ויתן את רשעים קברו לא
 גמצא בענינו דבר מזה כלל כל שכן יראה זרע יאריך
 ימים ואמרו ואת עצומים יהלך שללכי דבר מזה לא
 נתקיים בענינו ותמהתי מאד מהגאון מי הביאו
 לדעת הוה ומהחכמים אשר שבחו פירותו סוף
 דבר שהדברים האלה כלם הם זרים בלתי
 מתשבים בכתובים:

This double inter-

" if the punishment was to fall on
 " him, and Israel escape. So again;
 " for the transgression of my people was
 " he stricken;" also that " he made
 " his grave with the wicked," can-
 " not be said of him, much less, that
 " he shall see his seed, and prolong
 " his days." So likewise, that " he
 " shall divide the spoil with the great."
 " None of these circumstances can
 " well be applied to him. I therefore
 " greatly wonder, how Hagaon could
 " adopt such an exposition, and wise
 " men be found to commend it, since
 " the whole of it is absurd and con-
 " trary to Scripture."

But for all this, Abarbanel himself
 is much more absurd in his conceit than
 Hagaon, who interprets it of one
 single person, whereas the other most
 inconsistently applies it to Josiah in
 particular, and also to the people of
 Israel in general. This double inter-

pretation exposes him to many contrarieties and great confusion. The griefs borne by the man of sorrows, are said to mean the Gentiles, when this egregious commentator expounds this prophecy of the people of Israel; but on the contrary, when he interprets it of Josiah, these griefs are not inflicted on him by the people of Israel, but such as he himself sustained. Is it necessary to say any thing more, in confutation of such a double-minded man as this? But let us see with what propriety certain passages can be applied to Josiah. Could he be said to be lifted up and be very high, who was brought so low by Necho? Or to have done no violence, who committed violence against Necho? How can it be said of him, or any one except our Lord Jesus the Christ, after he made his grave with the wicked, and his monument with a rich man, that he shall see his seed,

seed, and that he shall prolong his days? &c.

For the same reasons, it cannot be interpreted of the people of Israel. The description of THE MAN OF SORROWS does not by any means suit a people or nation, no more than the circumstances predicted of his death and burial, and subsequent exaltation. And if this man is the Jewish nation, it must be the Heathens that ask, Who hath believed our report? the Heathens, who say, he hath borne our sorrows. But these words, "for the transgression of MY PEOPLE was he stricken," shew plainly that the prophet speaks of the Jews, and not of the Heathens, unless they will allow MY PEOPLE to be the Heathen. But can the Jews really be compared to the mute and harmless lamb? And have they done no violence, had no deceit in their mouth? Impossible.

R. Alshech, and the writers in the Talmud, rather than follow their old masters, who applied this oracle to the Messiah, have made it general, and so capable of being applied to any one they please, as to Akiba and others, though every line in the prophesy points out some particular person.

I shall close these objections with one observation upon the author of Niz-zachon, and other rabbinical books, that all their calumnies raised against Jesus, on account of his humiliation, and all other difficulties are removed by the parallel we have drawn between the man of sorrows in Isaiah, and our Lord Jesus the Christ, as described in the new covenant.

Thus, I am so far from supposing the argument in favor of Jesus, from this oracle in Isaiah, at all weakened by these contradictory, absurd, and impossible conjectures of the Jews, and of those, who may chuse to follow such blind

blind guides, that, on the contrary, I think it is confirmed by them, as they have furnished matter to shew that there is but ONE person, even Jesus, of whom this oracle can be interpreted.

My subject has already forced me to oppose Grotius, in one of his interpretations of the prophets ; and I cannot help lamenting, that the like necessity is now fallen upon me again, and in general, that so able and judicious a critic should suffer himself to be so miserably imposed upon by modern Jews. He follows Hagaon upon this oracle, and applies it in the FIRST sense to Jeremiah, notwithstanding what Ezra and Abarbanel have urged against this conceit. TO BE CUT OFF FROM THE LAND OF THE LIVING, means no more, according to Grotius, when applied to Jeremiah, than his being cast into prison ; and THE SPRINKLING OF MANY NATIONS, only the conversion of some Heathens from idolatry.

idolatry. The ninth verse he applies to the prophet, because the Jews threatned him with death, and many of them were afterwards slain by order of the king of Babylon. Jeremiah indeed survived the destruction of his own country, and continued to foretell the destruction of other nations, and the future restoration of the Jews; but this condition of the prophet is not equal to the glorious exaltation of him, who had suffered in Isaiah; and surely something more is meant by these words, "therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong"---than this, that when Jeremiah was set at liberty, "the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go." Grotius, however, influenced by the worst of all the Jewish interpreters, is compelled to acknow-

JEREM. xl. 5.

lege,

lege, "that not only in a more sublime, but often in the most literal sense, the words of this oracle are more applicable to Christ than to Jeremiah."

But we have much positive evidence, that the Jews anciently did apply this oracle to the Messiah. This is fairly acknowledged by Aben Ezra. The Chaldee paraphrase and Tanchuma both interpret the first part of this prophecy of the Christ. The latter says, "he shall be extolled above Abraham and above Moses."

The fourth verse of the following chapter is interpreted of Christ by the Pefikta, also by Aggoda Samuel, R. Huna, R. Acha. R. Alshech an-

^a Hæ notæ in Jeremiam quidam congruunt prius, sed potius sublimiusque, sæpe et magis κατὰ λέξιν (SECUNDUM VERBA) in Christum. Ad ISAIAE cap. liii.

^b Beginning at lii. 13.

יְרוּם מִן אֲבִרָהִם וְיִשָּׁה כְּמֹשֶׁה ;

swers

swers for them all, that “ the masters
 “ or rabbins of blessed memory with
 “ one lip or voice, according to re-
 “ ceived tradition, declare that these
 “ words are spoken of Meffiah the
 “ King.”

These men plainly discovered, that
 such extraordinary events as are publish-
 ed in this oracle by Ifaiah, must relate
 to some extraordinary person; and that
 they could not be well accommodated
 to any other than the Meffiah. The
 Christians having shewn a perfect re-
 semblance between Jesus and the per-
 son here described by the prophet, the
 modern Jews had no other way left to
 support themselves in their opposition
 to Christianity, than by denying what
 their ancestors had advanced, and by
 applying this prediction to any ob-
 ject rather than the Meffiah.

ר"ל פה אחר קיימו וקבלו כי על מלך המשיח
 ידבר;

From

From what has already been proposed, it should seem, as if this was an impartial representation of the matter, as it stands between Jews and Christians.

But we have adversaries of another sort to encounter, who, whatever use they may make of the Jew against the Christian, are equally an enemy to both. These men will call upon us to shew from the book itself, as well as the concession of Jews, that the prophet Isaiah really intended to describe the Messiah, and no other person, in this oracle: and this, I apprehend, may very easily be done; for if we look back into the subjects of the preceding chapters in Isaiah; if we consider, who he has been speaking of immediately before his description of the man of sorrows, we may determine, who this man is.

From xl. to lii. much is said of the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity

tivity in Babylon by Cyrus. In xli. 2. this great prince is called "the righteous man from the East." In xlv. 11. he is the "ravenous bird from the East, the man that executeth my counsel." In both these places Cyrus the Persian is said to be "the man from the East," because Persia is situated to the east of Babylon. In xliv. and xlv. he is expressly named Cyrus. In the first of these chapters, ver. 28, the Lord "saith of Cyrus, He is MY SHEPHERD, and shall perform all my pleasure:" in the other, he is called the Lord's ANOINTED. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus." Hence also it is said, xlviii. 16. "I have not spoken in secret." For in the verse immediately preceding he says, speaking of Cyrus, "which among them hath declared these things? The Lord hath loved HIM: HE will do his pleasure on Babylon, and HIS arm shall be on the Chaldeans."

“ans.” Ver. 15. “I, even I have spok-
 “en, yea I have called HIM: I have
 “brought HIM, and HE shall make HIS
 “way prosperous.” li. Relates to the
 establishment of the Jews under Cyrus
 and his successors. lii. Opens with a
 solemn proclamation, beginning with
 the same words with those in the for-
 mer chapter, verse 17. Zion is called
 upon to awake and recover from its
 captive state---“loose thy self from the
 “bands of thy neck, O captive daughter
 “of Zion.” Verse 3. “For thus saith
 “the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves
 “for nought,” to the Chaldeans, “and
 “ye shall be redeemed without money,”
 by Cyrus. Verse 9. speaks of the
 waste places of Jerusalem; and verse
 11. commands them to “be clean,
 “that bear the vessels of the Lord,”
 which were restored by Cyrus.

In verse 13. the prophet makes a
 transition from the deliverance of the
 Jews

Jews under Cyrus, to the deliverance of mankind under Christ.

That this is really the case, will perhaps appear more evident, if an error, committed by the unfortunate Michael Servetus, who was burnt alive at Geneva, is examined into. He was led, by the frequent mention of Cyrus, to apply chapter liii. primarily, though not principally, to him.

In an edition^a of the Latin Bible, published by him under the name of VILLANOVANUS at Lyons, APUD HUGONEM à PORTA 1542, is this observation upon chap. liii. verse 1. "Incredibilis res de Cyro, &c."....revera incredi-

^a The Jesuits at Lyons, when I enquired after this book, did not know that it ever had been published; and Mr. Arkenholtz, a very learned and ingenious man, the librarian at Hesse Cassel, where the works of Servetus are supposed to be preserved, though the CHRISTIANISMUS RESTITUTUS is lost, having been stolen out of the library, when the Landgrave himself was present, did not, till I convinced him, believe that Servetus ever published an edition of the Bible.

bis!

bilis! Could this oracle be applied to Cyrus, we should have less reason to suppose the prophet to have made a transition from him to any other person. But this is impossible, as well as "incredible:" and indeed Servetus, to do him justice, acknowledges, that the prophet took this opportunity of describing the sufferings of Jesus, the Christ, to whom ALONE in "a spiritual and true construction, the words of Isaiah can be applied."

But if it cannot be interpreted of Cyrus, because it contradicts his history in every verse, it must be referred, as is done by all the ancient interpreters, to the Messiah.

It is very natural and very usual with the prophets to make a transition from one great deliverance to another, as also from one great destruction to

*Cui soli convenit horum verborum sublimitas
et VERITAS.*

another.

another. Of the latter sort a remarkable instance occurs in Joel, where the prophet having described one great day of the Lord, in the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, immediately passes to the other great day of the Lord, in the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. See chapter ix. Of the former sort we have an instance, in the beginning of the chapter that contains a part of this prophecy^a, where Isaiah makes a transition from the captivity in Egypt to the captivity in Babylon, with no other pause than a comma between them. Can it therefore be doubted, that the prophet, after he has largely described the deliverer of the Jews from Chaldea, under such high titles as “the Shepherd of the Lord, and his Anointed,” should immediately subjoin a description of the Messiah, the deliverer of the world?

^a ISAIAH lii. 4.

It is certain, that this oracle cannot be interpreted of Cyrus; nor in all its parts of any other than Jesus the Christ; and it is usual and natural, as hath already been observed, for the prophets to make a transition from one deliverance to another: besides, it is so very singular, so very different from any thing, that ever did or could happen to any other being than Jesus, that whoever refuses his assent to this proposition, that Jesus is the Christ, the man of sorrows described by the prophet Isaiah from lii. 13. to the end of liii. must not pretend to excuse himself on account of any defect in the evidence from prophecy.

It may indeed be objected, that the translation here given of the ninth verse ^a, is very different from that in the English Bibles; and the Jews pretend, that two words, one in the eighth, the

^a Chap. liii.

other in the tenth verse, are not rightly explained. They say of the first, that instead of, "he was stricken," or the stroke was upon "him," it should be "upon them." The truth is, the Hebrew pronoun here made use of may be interpreted of one or more, and it may be left to the reader to determine which of the two best suits the context. That great Orientalist Dr. Pocock affirms, that "we proceed neither against the truth, nor the opinion and practice of the more learned Jews, in explaining this pronoun not of many but of one."

Kimchi, a celebrated grammarian among the Jews, whatever he may have said upon this passage of Isaiah,

* Nos vero nec contra rei veritatem, nec contra doctiorum apud Judæos vel mentem vel morem facere, cum et מל (ei) non (iis) interpretemur, Not. Miscel. ad portam Mosis, c. viii.

declares

declares in his Hebrew ^a Grammar, fol. 266, that this word is a pronoun affix, of the third person, singular, masculine: in support of which he produces two passages from the book of Job.

The other word which the Jews say we have not rightly applied, is the word SEED, verse 10. The Christians believe the disciples of Jesus are HIS SEED. They were not to call any man their father upon earth ^b. They were BORN AGAIN through the spirit, and are compared to little CHILDREN; and even the Gentile converts are called CHILDREN by adoption. The Apostle Paul considers his disciples as his CHIL-

^a Occurrit etiam מ quod sit affixum sing. 3. pers. m. ut JOB xxii. sed sibi proderit prudenter agens et xx demisit in eum loco cibi ejus. Nam ד et י, sicut scripsimus, continet in se signum pl. n. m. deinde n. s. m. indicium est. Nam ד pl. n. m. 3. p. nota est, et י s. n. m. 3. p. indicat, ideoque מ de pluribus et de unico usurpatur.

^b MATT. xxiii. 9.

DREN, and says expressly, " I have BE-
 " GOTTEN ye through the Gospel ^a."
 In answer to this Kimchi says, no in-
 stance can be produced in favor of this
 notion, that DISCIPLES may be called
 CHILDREN. But Pocock produces se-
 veral passages from Maimonides ^b, in
 which that great Rabbi says, that dis-
 ciples are called children, and such,
 according to him, were the sons of
 the prophets: also that disciples are
 sons.

^a 1 COR. iv. 15.

^b Audiat ergò hic MAIMONIDEM cui plurimum
 alias deferre solet et מורה נדבך DOCTOREM JUSTI-
 TIÆ, seu veracem insignire—DISCIPULI VOCAN-
 TUR FILII, sicut dictum est, ET EGRESSI SUNT
 FILII PROPHETARUM Yad. Talm. Torah. c. 1. § 2.
 &c. V. § 12.—DECETQUE HOMINEM CURAM
 GERERE DISCIPULORUM SUORUM, EOSQUE DILI-
 GERE, FILII ENIM SUNT ILLI, qui prosunt in
 hoc sæculo et sæculo futuro. idem in Com. ad
 Peah. c. 1. § 1.—honorandos, inquit, patres et sa-
 pientes QUI SUNT PATRES OMNIUM. Ibid. et vide
 Notas in Carmen TOGRAI, p. 3.

Let

Let us however suppose with Kimachi, that disciples cannot be called sons, surely there is no impropriety in the interpreting seed by doctrines, which are so frequently by all, and particularly by Jesus, compared to seed, and which are said to be sown, planted, propagated. If he saw of the travel of his soul and was satisfied, he may well be said to have seen the fruit of his doings, the seed he had sown. But Jesus himself has furnished us with an answer to all those, who object against his seeing his seed after his death; for after he had said to his disciples, that “the hour was come
 “in which the Son of Man should be
 “glorified,” he immediately adds,
 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ex-
 “cept a corn of wheat fall into the
 “ground and die, it abideth alone:
 “but if it die, it bringeth forth much
 “fruit.”

JOHN xii. 24.

The greatest difficulty is to give the true meaning of the ninth verse, which has strangely perplexed the commentators. Monsieur Le Clerc and Mr. White have inverted the order of the words, making GRAVE and DEATH change places, reading thus, "he made his death with the wicked, and his grave with the rich," which is just the reverse of what we read in our English Bibles. But is it fair, is it lawful to alter records or testimonies, to make them stronger in favor of him who produced them as evidence? Is not this to betray, rather than to serve a cause? What would an upright judge in any judicature say to the man, who should dare to be guilty of such illicit practices?

Monfieur

Hoc vero concesso, lata fenestra aperiatur luxuriantibus ingeniis Scripturam depravandi, et in quemlibet sensum flectendi: ita ut instar Cothurni The-ramidis, cujuslibet pedibus aprari possit. Quod enim

Monfieur Houbigant, who will not fuffer the text to reft undifturbed by his criticisms, turns the rich man into rich men, making the word plural, and prefixes a preposition to the word tranf-
lated, DEATH. He underftands the language too well not to fee, that the fame preposition fhould be prefixed to the firft noun as to the fecond ; but this ought to have led him, not to alter the text, but to examine, whether what he took for a preposition might not be a radical letter: efpecially as many good critics had long fince been of that opinion. See this

enim in prophanis auctoribus non audent critici (fine codicum vel interpretum autoritate, vel urgente neceffitate) ex proprio ingenio corrigere, et aliam lectionem fubftituere (quod in iftiusmodi libris vix ferendum :) in libris facris, quibus multo major reverentia debetur, quam ullis fcriptis humanis, plane illicitum. Unde illorum auctoritas non follicitanda, nec lectio ufitata mutanda, nifi ex optimorum codicum vel interpretum confenfu, vel cum lectio absurda et plane falſa in textum irrepfir, quæ nullo modo defendi poſſit. Waltoni proleg. vi.

well illustrated in the notes by a passage from Johan. Micrælius^a.

It is true, that the word, which we render the rich man, is here in the singular, when all the other nouns, not relating to the person of the Messiah, are plural: and if it had not been made use of to point out one single man, even Joseph of Arimathea, it would also have been in the plural, as the other word for wicked men immediately preceding it

^a Si malis, ex observationibus Masoretharum, Drusii et Schindleri, בַּמָּתִי posited est pro בַּמָּתִי mutato Kametz in Sheva præter morem. Sic igitur textus foret legendus, dedit cum impiis sepulchrum suum, et cum divite excelsa seu tumulos et monumenta sua. Nam quia sepulchra et monumenta sunt ædificia tumulo imposita, et ipsi tumuli quasi tellus tumens dicuntur בַּמָּתִי quod alias colles et delubra significat, commode pro ipso sepulchro capere licet. Et Jesu nostri sepulchrum cum impiis et divitibus fuisse quis negat? cum illis, quia ut latro cruce tollebatur; cum his, quia a divite condebatur in hortensi tumulo, satis pretiose exciso. p. 173. De Messia Patriarchis et Prophetis post Moses promisso—Autore Joh. Micrælio.

is.

is. And it is likewise true, if the word we translate DEATH had not been employed to express the sepulchre or monument of Christ, the same preposition, supposed to be included in the first letter of that word, would have been prefixed to the original word for "his grave." The preposition which follows, and is in the English Bible BECAUSE, should be ALTHOUGH. See Noldius.

Thus it happens with these sacred books, as with prophane authors, that when the MEDICA MANUS CRITICORUM is to perform an operation upon the text, it is often dislocated and maimed, and rendered almost incurable by improper applications. But whatever may be done with the historical books, we have no right to indulge any conjectural emendations in the prophecies. It looks too much like tampering with evidence. If they are faulty, they must

must even remain so: and we must take the evidence as it comes to us.

Doctor Sykes says this, which we follow, "was the ingenious interpretation of Forsterus first." It is to be found indeed in his lexicon, but then he was by no means the first, who published it. The Doctor agrees with the Septuagint in his translation of the first word, "he shall repay or recompense upon the wicked his grave, and upon the rich one in or by his death."

But this exposition is liable to the same objection as is made against the common translation, the want of the preposition to the word "his grave." And as he supposes the rich man to be Pilate, and the word DEATHS to relate to him, the copulative Vau is here made to relate to two different persons, to Messiah in the former part, and to Pilate in the latter of the same verse. See page 256. of an Essay in defence of
of

of the Christian religion, second edition.

Besides the authority of Drufius, Schindler, and many more, we shall find one of the best of the Jewish writers, Aben Ezra, defending the interpretation we have given of this verse. "Some," says he, "explain these words " of them who died in the captivity ; " but others assert, that the word " במותיו is to be taken in the sense " of במותימו, THEIR HIGH PLACES^b : " by the HIGH PLACES meaning a " monument placed over the grave ; so " the last word in this verse is not " very different from the foregoing, " which signifies grave or sepulchre."

This great grammarian condescends to take notice of an objection arising from

יש מפרשים על מתי גלות ויש אומרים שמלת
במותיו מגזרת ואתה על במותימו חדרך והטעם
בנין שיושם על הקבר והנה יהיה במותיו כמו
קברו :

^b DEUT. xxxiii. 19.

a difference in the punctuation of the same letters, when they signify HIGH PLACES and DEATHS, the one being pointed with a Sheva, the other with Kamets ; and from a parallel example he determines that they are the same under different forms. Compare Genesis xl. 7. with Esther ii. 21. In both places is the word (סריס); in one, the first letter (ס) has a sheva, in the other a kamets, though the sense is exactly the same in both ; so it is with the last word in the ninth verse of Isaiah liii.

But what weighs far more with me than any of these writers already mentioned, is the opinion of my truly learned friend Dr. Hunt, professor of Hebrew and Arabic at Oxford, who kindly communicated his thoughts to me in the two following letters, which I have taken the liberty to publish, though they were not, when written, I am sure, intended for the press.

“ I

“ I take the ב in בְּמֹתָיו to be a radi-
 “ cal letter, and the word itself to be
 “ the plural of בְּמָה, βημα, βωμος, ÆDI-
 “ FICIUM, LOCUS EDITUS, TUMULUS;
 “ which notion is agreeable to the de-
 “ scription of our Savior’s sepulchre or
 “ monument, mentioned Mark xv. 46.
 “ Καὶ κατεθηκεν αὐτον ἐν μνημείῳ ὃ ἦν λελατομη-
 “ μενον ἐκ πέτρας, &c. According to
 “ which account, the sense of the words
 “ will be, He made his death with the
 “ wicked (the malefactors put to death
 “ with him) and his tomb with the
 “ rich (Joseph of Arimathea). I was
 “ led to this sense by the turn of the
 “ sentence, having never seen it in any
 “ commentator before; and have since
 “ found it confirmed by Schindler,
 “ who, in his Lexicon, col. 171. has
 “ this translation of the passage: Et
 “ dedit cum impiis sepulchrum suum,
 “ et cum divite בְּמֹתָיו excelsa sua, h.
 “ est, monumenta sua. And the Cri-
 “ tici Sacri mention other authorities
 “ (Jew-

“ (Jewish as well as Christian) for this
 “ interpretation. And then, to connect
 “ this sentence with what follows, I
 “ would render לֹא לְ by THOUGH
 “ NOT ;—“ though he had done no
 “ violence,” &c. which is the sense of
 “ these two particles, Job xvi. 17.
 “ where we have almost the same words
 “ as here in the text. The whole
 “ passage is, “ My face is foul with
 “ weeping, and on my eyelids is the
 “ shadow of death ;” לֹא לְ, not for
 “ any injustice in my hands ;” or,
 “ though there is no injustice in my
 “ hands.”—Ch. Ch. March 27th, 1755.

In a subsequent letter the doctor
 observes,—“ Our Savior was crucified
 “ on Mount Calvary ; and it appears
 “ from Scripture, that he was buried
 “ in the place where he was crucified :

“ Ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κηπὸς, καὶ
 “ ἐν τῷ κηπῷ μνημεῖον^a, &c. And on this
 “ account perhaps there may be no

^a JOHN xix. 41.

“ great

“ great impropriety in supposing our
 “ Savior’s tomb to have been predicted
 “ under the name of *במות*, especially
 “ if we consider the usual situation of
 “ the Jewish sepulchres, that “ they
 “ were hewn out on high, and graven
 “ on a rock,” as the prophet Isaiah ex-
 “ presses it, xxii. 16.—If by *במות* be
 “ meant the *στυλη*, pillar, (as the word
 “ is often rendered by the LXX) or any
 “ other monument erected over, or
 “ near the grave, (many of which are
 “ to be seen in the eastern burying-
 “ places at this day) then, I conceive,
 “ the notion from *במה* excelsus, will
 “ not be improper ; the other word
 “ *קבר* signifying the GRAVE, or hollow
 “ receptacle of the dead body, into
 “ which Peter is said to look, STOO-
 “ ING DOWN, *παρακλίνειν*.”

I cannot yet take leave of this sub-
 ject, till I have mentioned the opinion
 of my learned friend Dr. Kennicott,
 who observes, that “ the first verb in
 “ this

“ this verse should probably be render-
 “ ed PASSIVELY, in analogy to the
 “ verbs preceding ; for, after the words
 “ HE WAS OPPRESSED, HE WAS AF-
 “ FLICTED, HE WAS BROUGHT, HE
 “ WAS TAKEN, HE WAS CUT OFF —
 “ should not ויתן be rendered, AND
 “ HE WAS PUT, OR PLACED ? It cer-
 “ tainly may be so rendered ; and I
 “ only desire leave to translate here,
 “ as the very same word (consisting
 “ of exactly the same letters) is now
 “ translated properly in 2 SAM. xviii. 9—
 “ AND ABSALOM’S HEAD CAUGHT HOLD
 “ OF THE OAK, (ויתן LXX. και εκρεμασθη)
 “ AND HE WAS TAKEN UP BE-
 “ TWEEN THE HEAVEN AND THE
 “ EARTH. I presume that every Chris-
 “ tian reader will be agreeably sur-
 “ prized now, at seeing the words
 “ (with this exchange) expressed in
 “ their regular translation :

ויתן את רשעים במותו ואת עשיר קברו :
 “ AND HE WAS TAKEN UP (εκρεμασθη
 “ SUSPENSUS FUIT) WITH WICKED MEN
 “ IN

“ IN HIS DEATH; AND WITH A RICH
“ MAN WAS HIS SEPULCHRE ^a.”

It must indeed be owned that greater liberty is here taken with the text than I have allowed of in matters of evidence; two words, *קברו* and *במיתו*, are made to change places, and (י) is turned out of the first of them. But then it should also be acknowledged, that the verb *מת* is rendered passively, as the other verbs relating to the same subject are, and that the author produces some remarkable instances in support of his criticism. He seems sensible, however, that the enemy might object to such alterations of the text, and therefore appeals only to Christians.

And now we may safely rest the proof from prophecy in support of

^a The state of the printed Hebrew text of the Old Testament considered. Dissertation the second, p. 372.

Christianity, upon this single oracle. If it relates to the Messiah, and was accomplished, in every part, by Jesus, and by no other, he must be the Christ. He appealed to it himself, saying, " This, that is written, must " yet be accomplished in me, And he " was reckoned among the transgres- " sors; for the things concerning me " have an end ^a," or will be accomplished. The apostles often refer us to it; and Philip, under the conduct of the divine Spirit, converted the eunuch by it. God grant it may have the same effect upon the minds of every one to convert or confirm them in the belief, that Jesus is the Christ!

^a LUKE xxii. 37.

C H A P. VIII.

P S A L M CX. EXPLAINED AND APPLIED TO JESUS THE CHRIST OR THE MESSIAH.

IN the course of these papers, I have observed over and over again, That as much stress may and ought to be laid on such prophetical parts of the Old Scriptures, as have a manifest relation to the Messiah, so much care ought to be taken not to injure the cause of truth by improper and fallacious applications.

That Psalm cx. is applicable to none but him, is out of question: but then, as it stands in the English Bible, it exceeds the ingenuity of man to reconcile it to his mission and character.

This is the shape it is presented in :

P S A L M CX.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

“ The Lord said unto my Lord,
“ Sit thou at my right hand, until I
“ make thine enemies thy footstool.

“ 2. The Lord shall send the rod
“ of thy strength out of Zion : rule
“ thou in the mids of thine enemies.

“ 3. Thy people shall be willing in
“ the day of thy power, in the beau-
“ ties of holiness from the womb of the
“ morning : thou hast the dew of thy
“ youth.

“ 4. The Lord hath sworn, and
“ will not repent, Thou art a priest for
“ ever, after the order of Melchizedek.

“ 5. The Lord at thy right hand
“ shall strike through kings in the day
“ of his wrath.

“ 6. He shall judge among the hea-
“ then, he shall fill the places with
“ the

“ the dead bodies : he shall wound the
“ heads over many countries.

“ 7. He shall drink of the brook in
“ the way : therefore shall he lift up
“ the head.”

But how in this shape can it be made
suitable to one who came to save, not
to destroy ; to the meek and lowly
Jesus, to one who submitted and who
suffered, but who never shed the blood
of man ?

What sense can be given to these
words, “ Thy people shall be willing
“ in the day of thy power, in the
“ beauties of holiness from the womb ;”
or, as it is in the margin, “ more than
“ the womb of the morning, thou shalt
“ have, or thou hast the dew of thy
“ youth.” Thus it is in the translation
from the Hebrew ; but in that from the
Greek, in our Liturgy, the words are,
“ In the day of thy power shall the
“ people offer thee free-will-offerings
“ with an holy worship : the dew of
T 3 “ thy

“thy birth is of the womb of the
 “morning.”—What is the meaning of
 the latter part of this verse, or how it
 follows from, or is to be connected
 with, the former part, may not be
 very easy to discover. But if these
 words were perfectly intelligible, how
 can it be said of Christ Jesus, the Lord
 on the right hand of God, that he
 “shall wound or strike through kings
 “in the day of his wrath, and fill the
 “places with the dead bodies; and
 “smite in sunder the heads over di-
 “vers countries?” Is this a descrip-
 tion of the suffering Messiah; this
 the character of Jesus? Was this
 oracle ever accomplished by our Lord
 and Savior; or, as the modern
 phrase is for many citations in the New
 Scriptures from the Old, can it be ac-
 commodated to him? He suffered his
 own blood, not the blood of others,
 to be shed; he was the Savior, not
 the destroyer of the world; he was

the prince of peace, and not a bloody tyrant; a law-giver, not an executioner; a Redeemer, a messenger, a mediator; and the ratifier of a covenant of grace, and mercy and forgiveness.

I know father Houbigant has made all things easy by his interpretation of this psalm; but then, by the same liberties taken with the text, he might have applied it to any other person than the Messiah, or made any thing he pleased of it.

I believe it will be difficult to produce from any author a more extraordinary instance of critical sagacity in corrupting rather than restoring the true reading of a word, than occurs in this author's notes upon this psalm^a.

T 4

I have

^a Houbigant asserts, that the words לך טל, tibi ros, are corrupted from ילדתך, after this manner:

1. The י was obliterated, and so lost by age: then,
2. the copiers, instead of לך, wrote לך: and, 3,
טל

I have already declared my opinion against any alteration of the original text in those oracles which are produced by us as evidence. If they are corrupt, they must remain so, whilst they are considered as evidence produced on trial of the cause we have to maintain against those who deny Jesus to be the Christ.

Jesus himself, and the Jews in his days, acknowledge this psalm to be a psalm of David, and apply it to the Messiah. For this we have the authority of three evangelists. "Jesus answered and said," as it is in Mark, "while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to

ל for תך: then, 4. whilst some wrote לך, and some לך, others wrote both, as in the copies now in use. SIC QUIDLIBET EX QUOLIBET.

* MATT. xxii. 41.—MARK xii. 36, 37.—LUKE xx. 41.

" my

“my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
 “till I make thine enemies thy foot-
 “stool. David therefore himself cal-
 “leth him Lord,” &c.

He is David's Lord, sitting on the right hand of God ; he is to rule over his enemies, who are to be subdued by God himself : he is to have a host more numerous than are the drops of morning dew from heaven ; he is to be a priest for ever, he is to judge the heathen : he is to be greatly exalted on account of his sufferings.

The author of Nizzachon or Victory, the Jewish champion, applies this psalm, as others have done, to Abraham. But Aben Ezra will answer for us, that it could never be said of him that God shall send the sceptre of thy strength out of Sion. Nor can it be applied to David, as the Chaldee paraphrase and Aben Ezra have done : it contradicts the old title, a Psalm of David, and the old application of it

it to the Messiah ; nor can David properly be called COHEN or priest, much less an ETERNAL priest ; and though that word may sometimes signify a prince, without doubt in this place it signifies a priest of a particular order. But then the author of Nizzachon asks, “ Does the Father ever call “ the Son his Lord ? ” Can Jesus be said to sit on the right hand of God, who descended and suffered ? Again, “ what army had Jesus thus ready for “ battle, and who were the kings that “ made war upon him ? ” Our answer to the first question is, That David, the author of the psalm, and not the Father, calls the Son his Lord : “ The “ Lord, Jehovah, said unto my Lord,” David’s Lord, “ Sit thou at my right “ hand until I make thine enemies thy “ footstool,” &c. It is true that Christ descended and suffered ; but then, as St. Paul reasons ^a, “ He that descend-

^a EPHES. iv. 10.

“ed is the same also that ascended up
 “far above all heavens;” where Christ
 sitteth on the right hand of God^a. And
 of the power of Christ in his exalted
 state, the inspired apostle St. John says^b,
 “The kings of the earth, and the
 “great men, and the rich men, the
 “chief captains, and the mighty men,
 “and every bond-man, and every free-
 “man, hid themselves in the dens, and
 “in the rocks of the mountains; and
 “said to the mountains and rocks,
 “Fall on us, and hide us from the face
 “of him that sitteth on the throne,
 “and from the wrath of the Lamb:
 “For the great day of his wrath is
 “come; and who shall be able to
 “stand?” This Almanzor of the
 Jewish faith, who cries out Victory,
 should have known the Christian’s
 creed, that Jesus, who suffered, was

^a COLOSS. iii. 1.—See also REVEL. v. 13.—vii.
 10, 15.

^b REV. vi. 15, 16, 17.

cruci-

crucified, dead and buried, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty : and this belief of Christians agrees so well with the prediction in this psalm of David, as to receive evidence from it, and such evidence as an honest Jew ought to admit.

Let us now in our turn ask the adversary, Could David say of himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit on my right hand? Could he declare himself, in the name of God, to be an everlasting prince or priest? or can these great things be said of any one less than the Messiah, whom the Jews own to be greater than Moses and Abraham, and whom David in this psalm acknowledges to be his Lord? Surely they cannot with the least appearance of propriety. . . . And as to the Jew's second question, it is answered by telling him, that the army of Jesus is an
army

army of saints, the apostles and people of God under the Messiah their prince; and every king and kingdom, that has opposed him, is his enemy, and will in the end be subdued, or converted by him.

Indeed the cxth psalm, compared with Isaiah lii. liii. is, according to my view of these matters, one of the clearest proofs that Jesus was the Messiah. In both he is described as one extolled and exalted, and very high. Compare Isaiah lii. 13. with Psalm cx. 1. In both he is said to have kings and nations against him, whom he is to subdue and convert: he is to sprinkle, as it is in Isaiah, many nations, by baptism and the dew of his doctrines: they are to become silent through astonishment, and shut their mouths before him. He is to rule in the midst of his enemies; he shall

▪ See ISAIAH lii. 15.

judge

judge among the heathen ; he shall shake and convert the heads over many countries ^a. His seed is to increase ^b; his people to exceed the drops of the dew of the morning ^c: Yet it hath pleased the Lord to bruise him ^d. He is to drink of troubled waters ; and therefore, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, shall he be exalted, or lift up the head.

But that this psalm manifestly relates to some future person, greatly superior to David, may be gathered from the first verse, and will appear from every other verse, when rightly translated. He is David's Lord, sitting at the right hand of God, and very great events are foretold concerning him and his dominion or future reign.

I have nothing to object against the common translation of the two first

^a PSALM CX.

^b ISAIAH liii. 10.

^c PSALM CX. 3.

^d ISAIAH.

verses,

verses, and therefore begin with the third, premising that I shall take the liberty of comparing the Oriental dialects, in order to obtain the full meaning of the expressions ; and where I find the same word in Hebrew and Arabic, of making all the use I can of the latter . . . which I think not only fair, but necessary ; the points, the conjugations, the grammar of the Hebrew dialect, having been taken from the Arabians: the book of Job being written in old Arabic ; and without a competent knowlege in that copious language, many words, many passages in the old Scriptures being inexplicable. . . They who are skilled in this language are the only competent judges of the truth of this assertion ; and to them I submit myself with pleasure . . . having much to object against those who have but a very moderate share of knowlege in what they call the Hebrew tongue.

After

After the prophet David has proclaimed the dignity of Messiah, as sitting on the right hand of God, with power to rule in the midst of his enemies, in the third verse he describes his attendants and followers: Thy people, says the psalmist, shall be ^a egregious for worth and readiness, eminently zealous in the day of thy army; or, in other words, when the clouds of witness, the apostles and their disciples, which constitute thy army, shine forth with resplendent sanctity or in beautiful array of holiness ^b, they shall

... נִרְבּוּ from נָבִי AGILIS, EXPEDITUS, EGREGIUS, NOBILIS. See Judges v. 2.

^b Bythner, in his *Lyra Prophetica*, hath given a good comment upon this verse.

IN DIE EXERCITUS TUI, [illo tempore quo exercitum tuum, evangelii præcones, in orbem terrarum emittes.

IN ORNATIBUS SANCTITATIS,] vitæ sanctitate.

EX UTERO AURORÆ, &c.] i. e. electi tui ex prædicatione evangelii maximo numero tibi nascentur, tanquam ros, quæ ex aurorâ, i. e. aëre matutino, velut ex utero subito producitur, et in guttas innumeras dispergitur. p. 324.

exceed

exceed in multitude the drops of dew from the womb of the morning: these are thy progeny^a, they who are born unto thee; or, as it is in *Isaiah liii.* thy seed shall increase, be numerous and fertile as are the early drops of dew from heaven.

“ In beautiful array of holiness.” Aben Ezra recites the original words as if they required no explanation. Jerom says^b, “ He is therefore pre-
“ sent with the Lord, that the saints
“ may shine.” R. Kimchi observes, that the word translated beauties, is not used in the plural: but is the text to be altered on that account, as is so frequently done by Pere Houbigant, who observes^c from Kimchi, that even in the

^a לדרות.

^b Ideo est cum domino ut splendeant sancti. The Septuagint have εν ταις λαμπροτησι των αγιων σου.

^c He reads “ holy mountains,” changing one of the letters in the original.

singular it is never used but in speaking of the temples ; which, if true, as it is not, the text may nevertheless admit of an easy interpretation, NON VARIATA LECTIO. In the temple were the cherubim, and the appearance of a man above the firmament on his throne *. And what an army the temple sometimes contained, may be known from comparing 2 Chron. xxiii. with 2 Kings xi. in the histories of Athaliah and Joash. And this glorious appearance of the people of God, may as well be applied to the saints under the new as under the old dispensation ; especially when we consider how often the writers of the new Scriptures allude to practices in the Old, and borrow the strongest images from it : we cannot therefore expect that the old prophets, even when they speak of the future age of the Messiah, should

* See EZEK. i. 26, 27, 28.

not speak of men and things as they appeared in their own times.

If the beauty of holiness means the temple, Jesus was found there, when twelve years old, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions^a." And of himself our Savior says, "I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple^b."

Some have supposed it to mean, not the temple, but the beautiful and holy city of Jerusalem. In this sense, the rod of his power came from thence, and the gospel, which is the "POWER of God unto salvation^c," was first preached there.

For my own part, if I could admit of any alteration in the text, it should be HOLY SHOUTINGS^d rather than HOLY MOUNTAINS.

^a LUKE ii. 46.

^b MATT. xxvi. 55.

^c ROM. i. 16.

^d טוֹטוֹ CELEUSMA, the shouting of soldiers.

I do not assert the word I have rendered by “thy progeny, and they “who are born unto thee,” to be a verb; but I persuade myself, that whoever considers the verb ^a from whence it is derived in the Oriental dialects, will have no difficulty in agreeing with me, that it here signifies progeny or thy people, as it is interpreted by Aben Ezra, who refers to those words in the beginning of the verse by the personal pronoun, “Thou shalt see THEM, (illum, populum tuum) and THEY “shall come to thee like dew.”

The word used for Thy progeny, occurs only six times; three in a singular, and as often in a plural form. The first place is Dan. xi. 6. where our translators have considered it as a

^a ילדה from ילד, the same with وَلَد PEPERIT, PROCREAVIT, GENUIT FÆTURA ET PROGENIE AUXIT. NUMEROSI EVASERUNT. Hence as a noun it signifies, NATUS, FILIUS, PROLES, &c.

verb, and as such rightly rendered it in the margin, by “whom she brought forth:” for Antiochus (called *ῥεος*) who was the grandson of Seleucus Nicanor, had dismissed his wife Laodicea, and espoused Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus; but not long after he sent for his former wife, who resenting this divorce, and to make sure of the throne for her son Callinichus, poisoned the husband, and Berenice and her son^a. The Septuagint therefore, who have taken the word which we translate as a verb, whom she brought forth, to be a noun, should not have prefixed a feminine article to it. In Joel iii. 3. and Gen. xxxiv. 4. and Zechar. viii. 5. it is young women. In Eccles. xi. 9, and 10. it is youth (*ἡ νεότης*). Bochart is of opinion that it may signify either young persons, or the season of youth, as

^a See Appian, Valerius Maximus, Pliny, Solinus.

Youth in English, and LA JEUNESSE in French. Horace also useth JUVENTUS for JUVENES, *Od.* 4. l. 3. Terence SCELUS for SCELESTUS; *Andria*, Act iii. scen. v. Virgil HONORI for HONORATO, *Æn.* v. 541. And this metonymy is allowed by the authority of the best writers in all languages, ancient or modern, our own included, as by Milton, FAVOR is used for FAVORITE, *b.* iii. 664.

After all, as Dr. Lowth well observes, there can be no more impropriety in interpreting this word, which is allowed to signify the season of youth, of young men, than that which signifies old age, of old men; *Levit.* xix. 32. and captivity of the captive; *Isai.* xlix. 24.

This interpretation is intelligible, and may well be applied to Jesus and his followers. But *Monf. Houbigant*

שיבה.

שב.

objects

objects to "thy people," and with the ancient versions would begin this third verse "with thee," instead of "thy people;" because in all that goes before or follows, no mention is made of this people. In answer to this I observe, 1. The prince or leader is with great propriety named before his people; but it is not true that no mention is made of them in what follows.

2. That the same Hebrew words occur, Judges v. 2. בהתנדב עם, which our translators render very justly, WHEN THE PEOPLE WILLINGLY OFFERED THEMSELVES; and this ought to be decisive against those who with the LXX. read עם WITH, instead of עם PEOPLE.

3. How naturally does the interpretation above given connect with the former and subsequent verses, as well as serve to introduce the glorious description of the leader of such an army of the saints?

But Houbigant, by adding a letter to the word we have rendered from the Arabic, “egregious and ready,” translates it, “I have done greatly^a,” and applies it to Christ, and not to his disciples. So again, by taking one letter for another, he chuses to read “in my “holy mountain^b,” instead of “in the “day of thy power;” and by inserting a letter, for “thy progeny,” reads, “I have begotten thee^c.”

It has been a general mistake in translating this verse, to render the preposition prefixed to the first word (ex) FROM, instead of (præ, magis quam) MORE THAN. For this latter use of the prefix, see Noldius upon the particles, who cites several instances to confirm it, and particularly this verse. His

^a He adds י to נרבת, and translates it magnificè
egi.

^b בהורי, the ה being changed for ר is, IN MON-
TE MEO SANCTO. So Symmachus.

^c For ילדתך, he reads ילדתיך.

words are PRÆ (RORE) UTERI AURORÆ, TIBI ROS GENERATIONIS TUÆ, More than the dew of the womb of the morning to thee shall be the dew of thy progeny. See also the remarks of the learned Dr. Lowth, IN PRÆL. X. DE SACRA POESI HEBRÆORUM, p. 88, 89. a work which does honor to him and his country.

Bochart, in his dissertation upon this psalm, asserts, the seventy interpreters have left ^a untranslated the words DEW TO THEE. But this is contrary to their proceeding in every other case; for where they have not translated words, they have faithfully transcribed them from the Hebrew into the Greek characters. The truth is, these words were omitted in the copy from which the Septuagint was translated. The other variation arises from the translators having considered the first letter

^a Ανεργηνευτες.

in the original word for Aurora or the morning, as a preposition prefixed, and not heemantic.

The word Dew is to be supplied in the first part of this verse, as it is in Psalm cxxxiii. 3. "As the dew of Hermon;" which words, "as the dew," must be repeated, to make sense of the next word, "as the dew that descends upon the mountains of Zion." And it is certainly more reasonable to allow of this ellipsis, than with Houbigant to be perpetually disturbing the text, who here turns Zion^a into Sian^b, that is Hermon over again^c.

This use of the preposition prefixed is confirmed by several passages in Scripture^d: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart MORE THAN in the time that their corn and their wine increased^e." Concerning this me-

^a צִיּוֹן

^b שִׁיֵּן

^c See DEUT. iv. 48.

^d DEUT. xiv. 2. JOB xxxv. 2. ISAI. x. 10.

^e PSAL. iv. 7.

taphor of dew, see the Chaldee paraphrase, which explains it, in commenting upon this psalm, by these words, "they shall hasten unto thee like descending dew." Aben Ezra, that excellent grammarian and interpreter of hard passages, refers to Psalm lxxviii. 9. "Thy people shall come unto thee like a PLENTIFUL RAIN." Dew is not only an image for fertility and multitude, but readiness, as may be seen in Micah v. 7. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."

Ver. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedeck;" a name that imports a righteous king, the prince of Salem or of peace. Jerom thinks that this alludes to the last supper of our Lord, because "Melchizedeck

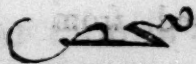
“ zedek king of Salem brought forth
 “ bread and wine, and he was the
 “ priest of the most high God^a.” This
 divine Being, both king and priest,
 was to be a priest for ever, and not of
 the Levitical order, which was confin-
 ed to the service of the temple, and
 therefore to perish with it.

In the following verses, 5, 6, is de-
 scribed what shall be done by this
 prince and priest, and leader forth of
 the army of the saints.

Ver. 5. “ The Lord on thy right hand
 “ shall shake^b, not without reforming,
 “ kings in the day of his indignation.”

“ He shall execute judgment in the
 “ nations, surrounded with his army :
 “ he shall shake, so as also to con-
 “ vert, the chief over many countries,
 “ or much land.”

^a GEN. XIV. 18. See HEBR. V. 6, 10. vii. 1, 2,
 3, &c.

^b מָדַע,  CONCUSSIT, A SORDIBUS,
 PURGAVIT, purificavit.

The

The greatest difficulty in the interpretation of this psalm, is to give the sense of the words, which in our English Bible are rendered, “ He shall fill
“ the places with dead bodies,” and which I have translated, as if in the execution of his judgment he was “ surrounded with his host.” In the original no word is to be found for THE PLACES; it is supplied by our translators; and if by changing a letter, the word Valleys may be introduced by Houbigant, the dead bodies disappear indeed, and all sense with them.

If we derive the word that is translated by "dead bodies," from a similar

* מלא is not in the future, HE SHALL fill, but filled, STIPATUS: and in the Arabic  AUXILIATUS FUIT.

If גויות be derived from **جوا** or **جوا**
 جوا, mutato scilicet **ش** in **س**, **جاش**
 castra

milar word in the Arabic, it may then signify tents or armies: and I have met with a passage in THE SOHAR, or some other cabalistic and rabinical book, where this word has been used for the heavenly host. But the opinion of ABEN EZRA is of far greater authority than that of any cabalist, and he explains it by Sabaoth or hosts. His words are, “^b being thou art a just king, as we find it written, “ and “ David was doing judgment and justice to all his people:” the sense is, “ You shall fight valiantly, for השם

castra sive tentoria, exercitus significat. جيش
exercitus, milites.

^a צבאות by גויות.

בַּעֲבוּר שְׁאֵתָהּ מֶלֶךְ צֶדֶק כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב וַיְהִי דָוִד עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק לְכָל עַמּוֹ הַטֶּעַם רַב לֵךְ לְהִלָּחֵם כִּי הַשֵּׁם עֹזֵר יְמִינָךְ וּמַחֲזֵק בְּיוֹם אָפּוֹ מַלְכִּים עַל יָדְךָ יִדְּוִן תַּחֲסֹד מֶלֶת אֲשֶׁר כְּמוֹ עִם לִבְבָּם שָׁלוֹם וְכֵן הוּא יִדְּוִן בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הוּא מֵלֵא גּוֹיֹת שִׁישׁ לוֹ צָבָא רַב הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה דִין בְּגוֹיִם עַל אֶרֶץ רַבָּה הִיא אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמְדֵי וּפְרָס אוֹ עַל רַבַּת בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן :

“ Jeho-

“Jehovah will strengthen thy right
“hand, and bruise, in the day of his
“wrath, kings by thy hand.”

“דן the word, אשר, WHO, is want-
“ing ; as we find 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

“(WHOSE) heart is perfect :” and so

“it is here ; he will judge in the na-

“tions, he who is full of bodies, i. e.

“to him is A GREAT ARMY: he will

“execute judgment in the nations up-

“on much (or the great) land, Israel,

“and Medea and Persia, or upon RA-

“BAT (the sons of Ammon) of the

“Ammonites.”

If this interpretation of the word
BODIES, given by the most learned
grammarian of the Jews, be right, the
psalm is more applicable to Jesus as the
Christ or Messiah, than in the sense
given it by Mr. Green, who speaks of
“the youth of thy army,” and of “fil-
“ling the FIELD OF BATTLE with
“dead bodies.”

The

The late Dr. Sykes was mistaken in his interpretation of this psalm, taking the dead bodiesto have been those of the saints and martyrs; which construction seems forced, and does not suit with the context. To fight with an army of dead bodies is very strange language; and if to drink of the brook in the way is, as some have interpreted it, to drink of a torrent of blood^a, it is a strange cup. I do not deny the propriety of this expression, an army of martyrs, meaning thereby the blessed SPIRITS of those who laid down their lives for Christ; but the Hebrew word GUY-OTH is not supposed to signify SPIRITS: it signifies here, we are told, DEAD BODIES.

^a Fundetur tantum sanguinis, ut etiam liceat victori bibere é torrente sanguinis cæforum, dum persequetur hostes. Rob. Stephan. in Psalmos Davidis.

Cruorem tantum occisorum, quasi torrentem, per vias emanaturum esse, ut de eo bibere Christus transeundo et victoriam prosequendo possit. Annotat. Brixiani.

I think

I think the authority of that great Rabbi Aben Ezra for the meaning of a Hebrew word is not to be slighted; and he interprets, FULL OF BODIES by A GREAT ARMY. And may we ask, where is the difference between MANY BODIES OF MEN, and an ARMY OF MEN? In Neh. ix. 37. and Ezek. i. 11, 23. the word GUIOTH signifies BODIES, LIVING BODIES, not carcasses. And from the Latin word CORPUS, we have two words, the one CORPSE, signifying a DEAD BODY; the other CORPS, a BODY or company or regiment of men. And GUIOTH not only signifies BODIES, but the MIDDLE of things: which latter signification I find frequently in the Syriac^a.

The pretorian band among the Romans, like the janizaries among the Turks, formed the centre or MIDDLE

^a Perhaps from جَو and جَوَّ

of the army, *MEDIUM AGMEN*. And if *GUIOTH* signifies bodies and the middle, it might well be made use of to express the hosts that surround the Lord. In the common translation we are forced to supply *VALLIES* or *PLACES*, to make room for the carcasses of the slain; whereas in Jeremiah xxxi. 40. a valley of dead bodies is expressed in very different terms^a, as it also is in xxxiii. 5.^b

The last verse in the psalm, which in the English translation is, “He shall drink of the *BROOK* in the way,” should, agreeable to all the ancient versions^c, be rendered “of the *TORRENT*”
“in

^a העמק הפגרים.

^b למלאם את פגרי האדם, *not* נזיות, *TO FILL THEM WITH THE DEAD BODIES OF MEN.*

^c I observe they render נחל by a word that signifies a *TORRENT*, *ex χειμάρρα*—The Syriac word is

נחל, which Erpenius renders *TORRENS*,
Trostius

“in the way shall he drink”—Surely not of blood! For that cannot be said of Jesus the Christ; neither can his way or life be compared with the calm state of him who drinks of the peaceful brook; for, on the contrary, he was to drink of rapid waters that roll in a deep channel, and are turbulent and swift. The cup he was to drink of was a cup of bitter afflictions; and therefore, because he suffered, or became obedient unto many sufferings, “shall he be exalted,” or his head shall be lifted up. Compare Isai. liii. with Phil. ii. 8, 9.

If these critical and conjectural observations are right, the entire psalm will appear as follows :

Trostius VALLIS. It may, therefore, signify such floods as are formed in the vallies by the rains that rush down the hills in winter, and will, consequently, convey a strong image of distress.

PSALM CX.

A PSALM of DAVID.

“Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool.

Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength from Zion, that thou mayest rule in the midst of thy enemies.

Thy people (shall be) eminently zealous in the day of thy army, (shall shine) in the beauties of holiness: more than from the womb of the morning to thee (shall be) the dew of thy progeny.

Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck.

The Lord on thy right hand (O Jehovah!) hath shaken (shall^a shake and reform) kings in the day of his indigna-

^a In the English Bible and the Vulgate the verbs in this psalm are rendered as if they were in the

dignation. He (the Lord) shall execute judgment in the nations, with a great army : he (the Lord) hath shaken (shall shake so as to convert) the chief over the great land (the Roman empire).

He (the Lord) shall drink of the torrent (of afflictions) in the way : therefore shall his head be exalted."

This last verse is admirably well explained by Jerom^s. To shew that these

the future tense, because the events they refer to are future. I leave the reader to his own choice, by inserting that which is rather a paraphrase than a translation in a parenthesis ; only I take the liberty to observe, that many instances may be produced of the promiscuous, or rather INDEFINITE use of the preterite and future times, without the converseive Vau : besides, it is a well known observation of the Christian and Jewish doctors, that the prophet seeing in his mind's eye the events he foretels, often speaks of them as already past.

* Torrens non habet aquas quæ semper perflunt : sed habet aquas de tempestatibus, de pluviis, de turbine, de procellis. Torrens nunquam est in montibus, sed semper in vallibus, in præcipitiis locis. Alienas aquas concipit et parturit, et tumens vadit. De torrente in via bibit. Torrens nunquam habet

these ancient ecclesiastical writers sometimes deserve our inspection, I have set down his comment upon this verse in the notes. And if the Greek or Latin copies are to be followed rather than the modern Hebrew copies, nothing can exceed the entire comment of Jerom upon this psalm. What the collation of MSS. undertaken by my learned friend Dr. Kennicott may produce, time will discover: enough has been said in this

mundam aquam sed semper turbidam, hoc dicitur quoniam seculi istius aquæ semper turbidæ sunt, semper plenæ tempestate. Vultis scire quomodo de torrente turbido biberit? Et ipse dicit: Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem. Et dicitur in evangelio: Et cœpit, inquit, contristari et conturbari. Bibit ergo etiam dominus noster de torrente istius seculi aquas turbidas, aquas tristes, aquas quæ non habent lætitiâ. Tulit calicem et implevit de torrente mundi: et quoniam turbidæ erant aquæ, dicit: Pater, si possibile est, transiat calix iste à me. Bibit ergo de torrente mundi istius, sed non bibit quasi in domo sua, sed in via ad alia ire festinans. De torrente in via bibit. Quia ergo bibit Dominus de torrente, et gustavit mortem: propterea exaltavit eum pater, et dedit ei nomen, quod est super omne nomen.

chap-

chapter to shew the necessity of such a work. Without the authority of MSS. I dare not alter the present Hebrew copies; nor indulge conjecture, whilst I am delivering ancient records produced as evidence. However, I cannot conclude this chapter without observing, that if the Greek translation is to be followed, in the third verse, it will not be possible to apply this psalm to any other than Jesus the Son of God, of whom alone it can properly be said, "before the morning star did I beget thee."—*πρὸ ἑωσφορος ἐγεννησθαι* &c.

C H A P. IX.

OF THE GREAT AND EXTRAORDINARY
EFFUSION OF THE SPIRIT FORE-
TOLD BY THE PROPHET JOEL, AND
POURED OUT UPON THE APOSTLES
AND DISCIPLES OF JESUS ON THE
DAY OF PENTECOST.

THIS small collection of the
prophecies of Joel, abounding
with beautiful descriptions, and rich in
metaphors and imagery, may be pro-
nounced one of the finest poems that
ever was composed.

It is nevertheless much to be regret-
ed, that the prophet did not make use
of some expedient to mark the period
when he prophesied.

It has been already observed, that
such prophecies are the most intel-
ligible, which are thus illustrated:
and

and that those have been most misapplied, which are in this respect most defective.

The upbraidings, warnings, and promises they consist of were grounded on the times which were, or which had been, and these once ascertained, the index may be so much the more easily found to their completion.... all of them, however, seem to have an eye either to the captivities of the Jews, or else to the destruction of Jerusalem, first by Nebuchadnezzar, and finally by Titus.

Obadiah is in the same predicament with respect to date as Joel; and yet in his brief prophecy of twenty one verses, it is discoverable, that he prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and before that conqueror had destroyed Idumea.

Amos describes the plague of the locusts, and Joel having done the same, it seems, at first sight, as if both had
treated

treated upon one and the same visitation. Whence some have inferred, that these prophets flourished in the reign of Uzziah and of Jeroboam the son of Joash. But upon a closer inspection it will appear, that they relate very different judgments. The calamity described by Amos was partial, that by Joel universal; with the former it rained in certain places, whereas during the latter, the pastures withered, the rivers were dried up, and all was as a destruction from the Almighty. Amos describes the drought and famine in the days of Elijah, and at the siege of Samaria^a. Pocock affirms, “ there
 “ is nothing that may make it either
 “ certain or PROBABLE that Joel lived
 “ so early as the time of Elisha, viz.
 “ under King Jehoram.”

Many other observations to prove these events to be different, may be

^a 1 KINGS xvii. 2 KINGS vi. 25.

seen in Bochart, and in Doctor Chandler's paraphrase and commentary upon the prophecies of Joel.

The great drought and famine in Joel exactly corresponds with that in Jeremiah^a. “ Judah mourneth, and
 “ the gates thereof languish, they are
 “ black unto the ground, and the cry
 “ of Jerusalem is gone up. And their
 “ nobles have sent their little ones to
 “ the waters; they came to the pits,
 “ and found no water; they returned
 “ with their vessels empty: they were
 “ ashamed and confounded, and covered
 “ their heads. Because the ground
 “ is chapt, for there was no rain in the
 “ earth, the plowmen were ashamed,
 “ they covered their heads. Yea, the
 “ hind also calved in the field, and
 “ forsook it, because there was no grass.
 “ And the wild asses did stand in the
 “ high places, they snuffed up the wind

^a xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

“ like

“like dragons: their eyes did fail
“because there was no grass.”

Now this famine was one of the four several denunciations against the Jews, when they were threatened with destruction and captivity under Nebuchadnezzar—“such as are for death, “to death; and such as are for the “sword, to the sword; and such as are “for the famine, to the famine; and “such as are for the captivity, to the “captivity.”

The same destruction is foretold by Zephaniah, who prophesied in the days of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah. “I will utterly consume all “things from off the land, saith the “Lord. I will consume man and beast; “I will consume the fowls of the hea- “ven, and the fishes of the sea, and “the stumbling-blocks with the wick- “ed, and I will cut off man from off “the land, saith the Lord. I will

Jerem. xv. 2.

“also

“also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Zephaniah and Joel both speak of the great day of the Lord as near, “a day of darkness and gloominess.”

Again; the trumpet in Zephaniah is manifestly the same that sounds in Joel, and therefore both proclaim the same event, the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar. The same famine, drought and destruction from the Almighty is foretold by Jeremiah; and indeed the destruction of Jerusalem, and subsequent captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, is mentioned by all the prophets, who lived from the days of Uzziah to those of Zedekiah, in the eleventh year of whose reign the city was besieged.

^a Chap. i. 2, 3, 4.

^b Compare ZEPH. ii. 1, 2. with JOEL ii. 1, 2, &c.

It

It is ever to be recollected, that the day of the Lord generally means the destruction of Jerufalem^a. The great day of the Lord always fignifies the destruction of Jerufalem, either by Nebuchadnezzar^b, or under Titus^c.

Hence it is moft evident, that the prophet Joel, by the found of the firft trumpet, proclaims the diftrefs and destruction of Jerufalem, under Nebuchadnezzar; and by the found of the fecond trumpet, the final destruction of Jerufalem under Titus.

The prophets who lived during the captivity, comforted their people with a promise of a glorious return under one, who is defcribed under very great

^a See ISAIAH ii. 12. xiii. 6. ZEPH. i. 7, 9. ZECH. xiv. 1. LAM. ii. 22. EZEK. xiii. 5. ZEPH. i. 8, 18.

^b As in JER. xxx. 7. JOEL ii. 11. ZEPH. i. 14.

^c As in JOEL ii. 31. MAL. iv. 5. MATT. xxiv. 21, 22. ACTS ii. 20.

images,

images, and in very high terms; as also the building of the second temple, and repairing the city and its walls and edifices, and the rest they were to enjoy; also the great and warlike deeds they were to perform under the Maccabees or conquerors, and the coming of the Messiah, which was the true honor, and the greatest glory of the second temple; and at last, the total destruction of the favorite city of Jerusalem, with the Jewish polity, civil and sacerdotal, by the Romans.

This order of prophesy is pursued by all those prophets who foretell these great events. Whenever the first destruction of the holy city is mentioned, the last also is foretold: whenever the glorious return of the Jews, from their captivity in Babylon, is promised, a transition is immediately made to the deliverance of mankind by the redemption of the world. After these transitions the prophets proceed in describing

ing the future state of the Jews from their return under Zerubbabel and under the Maccabees, till the old enemies are utterly subdued, and sometimes to the great day of the Lord in the last dissolution of their own polity—Thus the prophet Joel describes first the distress of the Jews by drought and famine, and their destruction in the great day of the Lord, the day of darkness and gloominess, the like to which had never been, nor should be any more after it to the years of many generations. Then the trumpet sounds again, and proclamation is made of the great things the Lord will do for his people and his land: he will remove from them the Northern army, and restore the years they had lost by the great army he had sent among them. After this the usual transition is made to the gospel-age under the second temple. The extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, which then, and at no other time whatever, was

was poured out upon all flesh, is next foretold in the clearest and strongest terms; the other great day of the Lord, the last destruction of Jerusalem, has then its place: and this part of the prophecy closes with these remarkable words, which may be considered as a short and comprehensive view of the gracious declarations in the New Covenant: "And
 " it shall come to pass, that whosoever
 " shall call on the name of the Lord
 " shall be delivered: for in mount Sion
 " and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,
 " as the Lord hath said, and in the
 " remnant whom the Lord shall call."

To be yet more particular; in the first chapter of our prophet Joel, is an elegant and lively description of the distress and famine of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, during the siege of it by the king of Babylon: and this is followed, in the beginning of the second chapter, by as strong a description of the great power of this army of vengeance, there-

Y

fore

fore called the Lord's, because " he
 " executeth his word, for the day of
 " the Lord is great and very terrible,
 " and who can abide it." Then opens
 another part of the prophesy, distin-
 guished from the former by a second
 solemn proclamation-----" Blow the
 " trumpet in Sion." The scenes that
 follow are the reverse of those described
 immediately before. " The people
 " are now to be gathered, the elders
 " assembled, the children, even the in-
 " fants at the breast. Corn and wine
 " and oil are to be given them, and
 " they are to be no more a reproach
 " among the heathen; the destruction
 " of the king of Babylon and of their
 " enemies is foretold. They were to
 " rejoice in the Lord: they were to
 " be blessed with both the former and
 " the latter rain; their floors to be
 " full of wheat, and fats to overflow
 " with wine and oil: the years of fa-
 " mine and distress were to be restored

“ or made up to them by the abundance
 “ dance they were to enjoy. They
 “ were to eat in plenty, and be satisfied,
 “ fied, and to praise the Lord their
 “ God, and to know and acknowledge
 “ that he was in the midst of them.”

These words cannot, with any degree of sense or propriety of language and design, be interpreted of any other joyful event than the return of captive Israel and Judah from Babylon.

And then opens another period, subsequent to their return and their establishment. “ And it shall come to pass,” not at the time of their return under Zerubbabel and Ezra and Nehemiah, but “ AFTERWARD,” even after all that had been said of their return and establishment; as some great and new event, distinguished by a new period or epoch, it is said, “ I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and
 “ your daughters shall prophesy, your
 Y 2 “ old

“ old men shall dream dreams, your
“ young men shall see visions.”

That these words relate to a period not very remote from the final destruction of Jerusalem, is evident from the words immediately following, in which that great event is as clearly described as is the former destruction of Jerusalem, under Nebuchadnezzar, in the first part of this prophecy.

“ In those days I will pour out my
“ spirit”—And then it follows, without any proclamation by sound of trumpet, as was done on opening each of the prophecies before, without any break or interruption whatever, as if it were part of the same prophecy—
“ And I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood and fire
“ and pillars of smoke. The sun shall
“ be turned into darkness, and the
“ moon into blood, before the great
“ and terrible day of the Lord come.”

Which description of the siege, and consequent

consequent destruction of Jerusalem, is the same with that of our Savior's in St. Matthew, which has been interpreted of the destruction of the world, but with what propriety let those words of our Lord determine, who closes all he has said of the great tribulation with, "Verily I say unto you, THIS generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

In the third and last part of this prophesy, Joel relates what will come to pass in those days, and in that time, when I (the Lord) shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. He apparently describes the great actions of the Maccabees: and that this is the period of time to which this part of the prophesy relates, is evident from the raising up of the children of Judah and of Jerusalem, which the enemies had sold to the Greeks. This return

* MATT. xxiv. 34.

Y 3

happened

happened under Demetrius*. The nations gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphet, which was near unto Jerusalem, are the Seleucidæ, who were afterwards destroyed in the same valley, which is, therefore, called the valley of decision or threshing. Tyre and Zidon and the coasts of Palestine, mean the descendants of the ancient enemies of the Jews, who assisted in the destruction and plundering of Jerusalem, and whose posterity were destroyed by the Maccabees. As the prophet had foretold the end of the Jewish state and polity before, this last part of his prophesy closes with the recompence the Lord returned to the nations who had distressed his people.

A word of consideration concerning the locusts already mentioned, may not be altogether improper in the next place: and as the commentators are

* See JOSEPH. lxiii. 5.

divided in their opinions of them, it will be but fair to give a brief view of what has been said on both sides.

To begin then with Grotius, Houbigant, R. Tanchum, and Abarbanel, &c. They are of opinion, that the prophet has used this image figuratively, to set forth the multitude of the Chaldean army. But then Bochart and others, on the contrary, assert, that it is an army of real locusts, and not of men. Some, as Cyril and Theodoret, have interpreted it of both. Jerom informs us, that some of the Jews, before his time, understood this description of the locusts to be figurative, and to mean the most powerful enemies of the Jews. And he himself is forced to confess, that when you read locusts, you think of the Babylonians. The force of the Chaldeans, says he, is described under the metaphor of locusts. This interpretation is favored also by the Chaldee paraphrase.

Pocock, who is far superior to all other interpreters in ascertaining the true import of words, and their natural construction and literal meaning, has with great learning and diligence endeavored to prove, that locusts, not men, are here described by the prophet; and then, after such his literal explanation, he allows it will "be lawful to any to apply them to such things as he pleaseth."

Throughout the prophecies of Daniel, kings, kingdoms, forces are represented under the names or parts of animals; the lion, bear, ram, goat, horns, wings.

The king of Egypt is, in the prophets, represented by Leviathan, the crooked serpent*. The literal meaning is, the crocodile of the Nile; the real import is Psammetichus, king of Egypt, taken prisoner by Cambyfes.

* ISAIAH xxvii. 1.

See Herodotus. "The great dragon
"that lieth in the midst of his rivers,"
is Pharoah^a; but in ISAIAH^b, the ser-
pent is Ahaz, the cockatrice from his
root is Hezekiah, and his fruit, the
fiery flying serpent, inevitable, the de-
scendents of Hezekiah.

The army of Hezekiah is described
under the image of a smoke from the
north. The army of Nebuchadnezzar
is compared to locusts, "they are more
"than the grass-hoppers, and are in-
"numerable^c." It is a common me-
taphor for numerous and destructive
armies: "As the running to and fro
"of locusts, shall he run upon them^d."
It may therefore be presumed, that,
under the metaphor of locusts in Joel,
is described the army of the Chaldeans:
and this presumption is moreover fa-

^a EZEK. xxix. 3.

^b xiv. 29.

^c JEREM. xlvi. 23.

^d ISAIAH xxxiii. 4.

See JUDGES vi. 5. vii. 12. NAHUM ii. iii.

vored by several circumstances in the description. The locusts were of four kinds, and the enemies appointed over the Jews were of four kinds^a. Jerom with other interpreters suppose the succession of these insects to mean the four several attacks of the Chaldeans; that is to say, 1st, In the last year of Nabopolassar, and third of Jehoiakim. 2d, When that king was taken prisoner, in the eleventh year of his reign. 3d, In the ninth of Zedekiah. 4th, About three years after, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

Such an enemy, such destruction “never had been, neither shall be for generation of generations,” or until the days of Vespasian. But the plague of locusts in Egypt was such as had never been before, nor was to be after them^b.

^a See JEREM. XV. 2, 3.

^b EXOD. X. 14.

Now

Now this latter destruction of Jerusalem is described by Joel, in almost the same words with the first, when “wonders were to appear in the heavens and the earth; the sun turned into darkness, before the great and terrible day of the Lord^a.”

But then the locusts, which in every other place are said to come from the east, are here called the northern army, which is the appellation given to the army of Nebuchadnezzar coming from Babylon, a city lying to the north of Jerusalem^b. And the reason for punishing this army, “because he hath done great things,” should incline one to think it rather an army of men than of insects; especially when it is considered, that the words which follow are almost the same with those in

^a Compare JOEL ii. 10, 11. with 30, 31.

^b See ISAIAH xiv. 31. JEREM. iv. 6. vi. 22, 23. x. 22. EZEK. xxvi. 7.

ISAIAH^a, where the prophet, speaking of the indignation of the Lord against the twenty-seven nations, mentioned by JEREMIAH^b, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, says, “their slain also
“ shall be cast out, and their stink shall
“ come up out of their carcases.”

“The drunkards^c,” is a character given to Ephraim^d; and excessive drinking is assigned as a reason of the captivity of Israel. They “that drink
“ wine in bowls, &c.---therefore now
“ shall they go captive, and the banquet
“ of them that stretched themselves
“ shall be removed.”

“My vine^e,” is the name of Judah^f: but then, indeed, the acknowledgment of it by that name, does not seem to carry any reproach along with it.

^a xxxiv. 3.

^b xxv. 17.

^c JOEL i. 5.

^d ISAIAH xxviii. 1, 3.

^e AMOS vi. 6, 7.

^f JOEL i. 7.

^g See PSAL. lxxx. and chap. ii. of this book.

And

And again^a, “The seed is rotten
 “under the clods, the garners are laid
 “desolate, the barns are broken down,
 “for the corn is withered.” These
 calamities are the natural consequences
 of war, and not the work of locusts.
 And the whole is a picture of a country
 not only pillaged and laid waste, but
 also deprived of its inhabitants, which
 was the truth of the case; they having
 been carried into captivity.

I am not insensible, that the discus-
 sion of this question might have been
 dispensed with: it is not of any im-
 mediate consequence to my argument,
 whether Joel was to be understood li-
 terally or figuratively.

It is enough for me, that the passage
 concerning the effusion of the Holy
 Spirit is express, and therefore not to
 be rationally disputed; that the effu-
 sion did actually take place in the

^a JOEL i. 17.

gospel ; and that this very prophecy is referred to the times of the Messiah by several Jewish writers*.

It must not therefore be said, that this oracle was accomplished in the revival of the prophetic spirit in Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who prophesied after the return of the Jews from their captivity. It is not limited to the Jews ; on the contrary, it is poured out upon Jew and Gentile, upon all flesh ; not upon two or three prophets only, but upon servants “ and handmaids ;” when “ your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” “ The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal—By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be

* Tanchuma, fol. 65. 3. Bammidbar Rabba, sect. 15. Midrash Shochar tof, &c.

“ bond

“bond or free; and have been all
 “made to drink into one Spirit.”

And to the day of Pentecost this miraculous communication was especially reserved, that every vessel might be fitly prepared to receive it. Before this great event, the disciples of Jesus were not fully informed of the great business of their mission. Till the death of their master, they seem to have labored under the common prejudice of the Jewish nation, in expecting a temporal deliverer: and after his death they did not readily believe the report of his resurrection. But when they were satisfied, by his appearance and continuance with them, as also by other sensible demonstrations, that he was actually risen, and became eye-witnesses of his glorious ascension into Heaven, from whence he came, they obeyed the orders they had received to wait for

• 1 COR. xii. 7, 11, 13.

the

the coming of the Spirit and power promised from the Father ; the Comforter, that could not come before the appointed time, which was the fiftieth day (as the word Pentecost signifies) after his resurrection, and ten after his ascension.

Forty therefore was the time of his continuance on the earth, and the interval afterwards was employed in filling up the vacancy made by the apostasy and death of Judas, in prayers and supplications, and in collecting the whole community together.....For it appears, that Peter discoursed to one hundred and twenty of them at one meeting: and that they, or at least the twelve, lived all together in an upper chamber.

Thus, when the fiftieth day, or day of Pentecost, was fully come, they
 “ were all with one accord in one
 “ place. And suddenly there came a
 “ sound from Heaven, as of a rushing
 “ mighty wind, and it filled all the
 “ house

“ house where they were sitting. And
 “ there appeared unto them cloven
 “ tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon
 “ each of them : and they were all
 “ filled with the Holy Ghost, and be-
 “ gan to speak with other tongues, as
 “ the Spirit gave them utterance.”

This was the great and solemn day of the accomplishment of the qualifications and mission of the disciples of Jesus.

When they were first chosen by their master, they were sent to publish the glad-tidings that the long expected Messiah of the Jews was come, according to the exact completion of the times delivered in the prophetic books, and to declare that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. It was nigh, but did not actually commence till Jesus had accomplished all that was required of him by his Father, all that had been foretold in the ancient Scriptures of the Jews. His obedience was to be perfected, and then he was

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to be received into the glory that was set before him. And perhaps we shall not transgress, if we believe his first act after his inauguration in Heaven, to have been the mission of the Spirit in the extraordinary manner related by his disciples.

The kingdom of Heaven, as it means the dispensation of the Gospel in the publishing the resurrection of Jesus, and, in consequence of his resurrection, the resurrection of all that believe in him unto life eternal, did not commence till the day of Pentecost was fully come, till the disciples had received the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit promised to them, by their master, when he took leave of them, saying, “ he shall teach you all things, “ and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto “ you ^a.”—It was first necessary that the Messiah should be cut off, the Shep-

^a JOHN XV. 26.

herd smitten and the flock scattered ; or, in other words, that Jesus should be taken away, and his apostles spread themselves, together with the word of God and the doctrines of Jesus, throughout all the earth. But then he assures them, he will see them again, which he did after his resurrection ; and he urges the necessity of his departure, to make way for the descent of a Comforter, who was to abide with them for ever.

One proof of this was what they had already seen accomplished in the person of him who was the messenger or ambassador of the covenant, the Lord from Heaven. Another proof was the promise and prediction he himself had given them, and which they were to remember when the time should come.

The apostles represent their sensation of the residence of the Spirit of God upon them, under the images of

flames of fire vibrating, and of rushing wind. But this was not all : for every man of every nation at Jerusalem ; Parthian, Mede, and Elamite, Arabian, Grecian, Roman, heard them speak in their respective tongues the wonderful works of God. It is impossible that either the apostle that spoke, or the man that heard him, should be deceived in this gift of tongues ; hence, therefore, undeniable evidence to them and all who heard them of the presence of the Spirit and power of God with them.

Thus we find a conformity as full and complete as it is wonderful, between that portion of Joel's prophecy, principally insisted upon, and this signal event.—“ And they were all filled
“ with the Holy Spirit, and began to
“ speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance---every man

Acts ii. 1, &c.

“ heard

“heard them in his own language,
 “Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
 “and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and
 “in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pon-
 “tus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphy-
 “lia, in Egypt, and in the parts of
 “Libya about Cyrene, and strangers
 “of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
 “Cretes and Arabians, (all declared)
 “we do hear them speak in our tongues
 “the wonderful works of God.” The
 strangers understood, were convinced,
 and made acknowledgement of the
 truth.....But those present, who were
 not strangers, who, consequently,
 did not understand the various lan-
 guages thus variously made use of; and
 who were more disposed to revile the
 preachers, than accept the doctrines,
 imputed this divine gift to “new wine;
 “when Peter, standing up with the
 “eleven, lift up his voice, and said
 “unto them, Ye men of Judea, and
 “all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be

“ this known unto you, and heark-
 “ en to my words: For these are not
 “ drunk, as ye suppose, seeing this is
 “ but the third hour of the day. But
 “ this is that which was spoken by the
 “ prophet Joel, And it shall come to
 “ pass in the last days, saith God, I
 “ will pour out of my Spirit upon all
 “ flesh: and your sons and your
 “ daughters shall prophesy, and your
 “ young men shall see visions, and
 “ your old men shall dream dreams:
 “ And on my servants, and on my
 “ handmaidens I will pour out in those
 “ days of my Spirit, and they shall
 “ prophesy.”

Thus Peter himself sets the seal to
 the prophesy under consideration: and
 the time when it was fulfilled is almost
 as remarkable as the manner of fulfil-
 ling it.... The fiftieth day after the
 passover is numbered according to the
 law, commanding the offering of the
 loaves

loaves and the first fruits to the Lord.

On this day the law of God had been promulgated from Sinai: the city swarmed with multitudes; and all were within the reach or knowledge of a truth, so miraculous in itself, and in its consequences so interesting to all.

What the various gifts of the Holy Spirit thus conferred and distributed were, are enumerated by St. Paul. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit—To one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of Spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the in-

* LEVIT. xxiii. 15.

† 1 COR. xii. 4—11.

“terpretation of tongues. But all
 “these worketh that one and the self-
 “same Spirit, dividing to every man
 “severally as he will.”

But nothing is more remarkable than the effect this had upon themselves: they had been slow in their belief; they had entertained improper notions of their master and his mission: they had forsook him at his trial, and they remained in a state of confusion and distraction after his death, which a personal communication of forty days was necessary to remove.

Even at parting, Christ himself seems to intimate, that something was still wanting for their better qualification.—“When he, the Spirit of Truth,
 “is come, he will guide you into all
 “truth: for HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF
 “(FROM) HIMSELF; but whatsoever he
 “shall hear, that shall he speak: and
 “he will shew you things to come.
 “He shall glorify me; for he shall
 “receive

“receive of mine, and shall shew it unto
“you.”

Thus, when filled with the Divine Spirit, they became at once enabled thereby to discharge the duties they were intended for, when separated from the rest of the world by their great Master. Men taken from the lowest of the people, fishermen, rude and unlettered, appear to the world more knowing than the wisest of men; and under the conduct of the Spirit of truth as well as of wisdom, they set out on the conversion of the world, and succeed in it. They spare no fatigues or labor; they encounter such dangers, and perform such miracles, are themselves endued with, and communicate to others, such extraordinary powers, that sealing the evidence they gave of what they had seen with their blood, leaves no room

^a JOHN xvi. 8, 13, 14.

to

to doubt that they were sent by Christ, and that he was sent from God—In confirmation of this, we have the evidence of prophesy fulfilled, and such attestation from history as cannot be rejected. And though these extraordinary powers have long since ceased, we enjoy the fruits of them. We have many predictions concerning the future state of the church, in the ancient prophets, and such knowlege and such assistance in the inspired writings, as will secure to us all the blessings they promise to all who hear and do the word, and continue faithful in it to the end.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

CONCERNING THOSE PASSAGES WHICH, THOUGH CITED FROM THE OLD SCRIPTURES IN THE NEW, ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO FORETEL THE EVENTS THEY ARE APPLIED TO AND SAID TO FULFIL, BUT ARE ONLY ACCOMMODATED TO THEM.

ALL the prophecies, all the passages hitherto cited by me, in the foregoing chapters, are taken in their literal and obvious sense.

But whether every citation from the Old Scriptures is to be considered as a prediction accomplished by the event to which it is applied in the New, has been much controverted; and they who have not approved of this opinion, that every one of these prophecies were originally delivered by the prophet to point out the event to which it has after-

wards been applied, chuse to say that such passages have been ACCOMMODATED, by the writers of the Christian Scriptures, to the purposes for which they are cited.

If it is objected that such expressions as these, “ of fulfilling a prophecy,” and “ that it might be true which was “ said by the prophet,” seem to imply something more than a mere ACCOMMODATION of phrases; the answer is, that the same use of the same words may be found in other authors, against which the charge of impropriety would never have been brought, and that therefore the objection is to be treated as no other than a cavil or calumny.

In Ælian, Diogenes Sinopenfis is reported to have said, “ that he fulfilled in himself all the curses of tragedy;” and Olympiodorus, in his

^a ΑΥΤΟΣ ΕΚΠΛΗΡΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΥΠΟΜΕΝΕΙ ΤΑΣ ΕΧ ΤΗΣ ΤΡΑΓΩΔΙΑΣ
ΕΡΑΣ.

Life of Plato, has this expression, "that
"it might be true concerning him";"
and then cites a line from Homer, which,
however applicable to that great phi-
losopher, is not to be considered as an
oracle delivered by the poet with a
view to the particular use or ACCOM-
MODATION of it by this biographer.

It is certain that several passages in
the Grecian poets are cited or alluded
to in the writings of the New Scrip-
tures, and many more from the Old,
which are not to be considered as pro-
phesies.

But indeed to an attentive mind the
difference will appear very great be-
tween the citations from prophane au-
thors and the prophets.

All Scripture is given by inspiration;
the writings of the Old and New Scrip-

ἵνα ἀληθὲς περὶ αὐτῶν γένηται,

Τὰ καὶ ἀπογλώσσης μελιτὶ γλυκῶν ῥέειν αὐδῆ.

Words sweet as honey from his lips distill'd. POPE.

ture

ture are to be considered as one work, written, it is true, by different persons at different times, but dictated by the same Spirit. They relate the uniform conduct of God to his people; and the divine proceedings under the new dispensation bear a strict conformity to those under the old: they are parallel, and therefore a reference is frequently made to rites and ceremonies, and circumstances and events that are exactly similar in both.

But there is still something more to be observed concerning citations from the Old Scriptures, even of those which are said to be only ACCOMMODATED; for there is not only a conformity of events, and a unity of design under the conduct of the same Spirit in both Scriptures, the Old as well as New, but the promises, contained in the former, are accomplished by the latter, and they both describe the same Messiah, an invisible conductor of the people of
 God

God under the old dispensation, and a visible guide to them in the new.

It is a remark that deserves particular attention, that the prophets representing two persons, the Word or the Messiah, and themselves, in the very same discourses, will sometimes speak of themselves, and at other times in the character they are commanded to assume. Of this a thousand instances may be given.

In Isaiah liii. the prophet speaks of himself and other inspired persons, when he asks, "Who hath believed our report?" of unbelievers, when he asks again, "to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" from thence to verse 12th of the suffering Messiah, and then immediately in the first person, as God.

In Zechariah xi. from the beginning of the sixth verse, till the prophet takes his staff, he represents and speaks in the person of the Messiah, whose conduct

duct is here figuratively described. In Ezekiel xxxvii. 16, 17. the prophet writes the names of the tribes upon two sticks, which joined together aptly express the union of all the tribes. But in Zechariah^a, the prophet takes the shepherd's crook or staff, to shew the office and power of the Messiah, the Logos or Word, for to feed is to govern.

In one hand he holds the staff that he calls BEAUTY, to express the delight that the Lord has in governing his people, whilst they do what is pleasing in his sight, and strictly observe their part of the covenant subsisting between him and them. The other staff is properly called BINDERS, to express the union of Israel and Judah.

Ver. 7. "I took unto me two staves;
 "the one I called Beauty, and the
 "other Bands, and I fed the flock,

^a Chap. xi.

“ 8. Three shepherds also,” Jason, Menelaus, and Alcimus, “ I cut off in
 “ one month, and my soul loathed
 “ them, and their soul also abhorred
 “ me. 9. Then said I, I will not
 “ feed you : that that dieth, let it die ;
 “ and that that is to be cut off, let it
 “ be cut off ; and let the rest eat, eve-
 “ ry one the flesh of another.”

This is a description of the distresses they endured under the Seleucidæ.

10. “ And I took my staff, even
 “ Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I
 “ might break my covenant which I
 “ had made with all the people,” on
 the return from the captivity in Ba-
 bylon. “ 11. And it was broken in
 “ that day : and so the poor of the
 “ flock that waited upon me, knew that
 “ it was the word of the Lord.”

After this dissolution of the covenant between the Lord and the Jews, in consequence of their pride and other corruptions, for which, notwithstand-

A a

ing

ing the glorious promises made them on their return, and which they had forfeited by breaking the covenant first on their part, they were delivered up to their enemies.

On this occasion, the fate even of the shepherd himself is related, as it happened not long after the time of these troubles, which extended to the reign of Herod.

“ And I said unto them,” the prophet said unto them, the rulers of the people, relating here what really happened when one of the disciples of Jesus demanded the price of the Lord, “ so they weighed for my price thirty “ pieces of silver.” “ And the Lord “ said unto me, Cast it unto the pot- “ ter : a goodly price that I was prized “ at of them ; and I took the thirty “ pieces of silver, and cast them to the “ potter in the house of the Lord.”

It is the Messiah, the governor, the good shepherd, whom the Jews had rejected,

rejected, and not the prophet Zechariah, who, as one dismissed, demands the lowest price given to shepherds. This has manifestly a reference to what happened when Messiah appeared in the flesh, and was again rejected by the Jews.

The only difference in this account, given by Zechariah, is, that the prophet exhibits what was done by a third person, without introducing him into the relation. But this difference is such, as will not hinder a judicious and impartial man from believing the prophet, or the Word, to have had the future treatment of the same shepherd in view.

And hence I take leave to remark, that it is a necessary key, in the interpretation of the Scriptures of the new Covenant, that many things applied to our Lord in those writings are his own words, delivered under the character of the Lord, the Logos or Word, or Michael, and therefore not to be con-

sidered merely as ACCOMMODATIONS of phrases taken from the Old Scriptures, and applied to different purposes and persons in the New.

The shepherd, called the fellow of God^a, was to be smitten, the sheep were to be scattered, two parts of all that inhabited the land were to be cut off and die, a third only left, which was to be brought through the fire, refined as silver, and tried as gold. Then it follows, “ They shall call on my
“ name, and I will hear them ; it is
“ my people, and they shall say, The
“ Lord is my God.”

The like events happened under the Gospel ; the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered, they were to endure severe trials, and their faith was to be more precious than gold tried with fire. To the Jews our Savior said, “ Behold, your house is left unto

^a ZECH. xiii. 7, 8, 9.

“ you

“ you desolate : and verily I say unto
 “ you, Ye shall not see me until the
 “ time come when ye shall say, Blef-
 “ fed is he that cometh in the name of
 “ the Lord^a.” Our Savior here fore-
 tels the desolation or destruction of Je-
 rusalem ; and instead of comforting the
 Jews with a prospect of a third temple,
 and the restoration of bloody sacrifices,
 in some future age or advent of the
 Messiah, he expressly declares, they
 shall see him no more till they shall
 acknowledge him, by saying, Blessed is
 he that cometh in the name of the
 Lord.

The inference I shall draw from
 these passages in the Old and New
 Scriptures compared, and which I have
 considered as parallel, is, that it is com-
 mon for the Messiah, the Word, to re-
 peat, under the new dispensation, what

^a LUKE xiii. 35. MATT. xxiii. 37, 39. PSAL.
 cxviii. 26.

he had before said, by the mouths of his prophets, in the old:

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion THE DELIVERER, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins."

These are the words of ISAIAH lix. where, if we suppose the prophet to speak of the redemption of the Jews from their captivity by Cyrus, it is as evident that the Messiah was the invisible Redeemer, as that Zerubbabel was the visible leader of the Jews.

* xi. 25, 26, 27.

That the Messiah, the Logos, who is also called Michael, was concerned in the redemption of the Jews under Cyrus, is evident from the words of the angel sent to Daniel, who tells that prophet, that “ the prince of the “ kingdom of Persia,” who was Cyrus, “ withstood me one and twenty days : “ but lo, Michael,” “ the first of the “ chief princes,” as it is well rendered in the margin of our English Bibles, who is the Messiah, “ came to help me ; “ and I remained there with the kings “ of Persia^a.” And in one of the many sacred hymns of praise offered unto God, for the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity, it is said, “ He sent his Word, the Logos, and “ healed them, and delivered them “ from their destructions^b.”

St. Paul therefore interprets the words in Isaiah of Christ, and not of

^a x. 13.

^b PsAL. cvii. 20.

Cyrus or Zerubbabel; for they are true of him, of Jesus, not in a secondary or accommodated meaning, but in their primary sense, as he commanded in chief, and superintended all in the care of God's people. If they are true of Cyrus, they are so, because he granted an edict in favor of the Jews; but this was not obtained till the angel of the Lord, Michael, the chief prince, who was in the court of Persia, contended with Cyrus for it, and prevailed.

Many passages may be applied to Zerubbabel, and to Judas Maccabæus, and others, who commanded under Michael, the Prince and the Messiah, which primarily belonged to him, as the same actions are sometimes ascribed to the commander in chief, and the officer who acts under him; not that I think these passages afford a double meaning, though they imply a superior and subordinate command.

Of

Of this a most remarkable instance occurs in ISAIAH^a: “Who is this that
 “cometh from Edom, with dyed gar-
 “ments from Bozrah? this that is glo-
 “rious in his apparel, travelling in the
 “greatness of his strength? I that
 “speak in righteousness, mighty to
 “save.” This prophesy relates to the
 victory obtained by Judas Maccabæus.
 Pere Houbigant, who has reason to be
 displeased with Grotius for interpreting
 so many prophecies concerning Messiah,
 as if in a primary sense they related to
 other persons, here entirely agrees with
 him, and asserts, that he has happily
 interpreted this whole chapter of Judas
 Maccabæus^b.

It is certainly true of him, that he
 returned victorious from Edom and
 Bozrah, which cannot be said of our

^a lxiii. 1.

^b Hæc intelligimus de Judâ Machabæo cum
 Grotio, qui hoc totum caput de eodem feliciter
 interpretatur.

Lord,

Lord, after he was made flesh and dwelt among us. But I beg leave to dissent from Grotius, when he applies these words, "I, mighty to save," and every other part of the answer to the prophet, in a primary sense to this servant of the Lord; when from the strength of the expression, and the usual manner of the prophets, speaking sometimes in their own name, and then in the name of him who inspires them, I cannot but think it is the Lord, the Messiah, who here describes the glorious deeds he had accomplished by the hands of his servant Judas Macabæus.

This method of interpretation should, I apprehend, be applied in every instance, where the prophet, describing any victory obtained over God's enemies, or other great events, uses expressions, that are more suitable to the majesty of God, than the vain boastings of man.

It

It is at least certain, that the best and wisest of men, in all times and places, have acknowledged the providence of God in war, have prayed to him for his assistance, and given glory to him for success.

Cyrus, whom Æschylus justly calls a HAPPY MAN^a, laid it down as a maxim always^b to begin with Heaven. The words he gave on the onset in every battle were these, “GOD THE SAVI-
“OR AND THE COMMANDER,” or “GOD
“FIGHTING WITH US AND OUR LEAD-
“ER.” Once as he mounted his horse^c, and cast his eyes around to see which way he should order his march, he heard the voice of thunder on his right

^a Κυρος ευδαιμων Ανηρ.

^b Απο Θεων ὁρμαδαι αει.

CYROPED.

^c Ζεὺς σωτηρ και ἡγεμων.

ibid.

^d Ζεὺς ΣΥΜΜΑΧΟΣ και ἡγεμων.

ibid.

^e Επει δε ανεβη και εση αποβλεπων, ἡπερ εμελλε πορευ-
εσθαι, βροντη δεξια εφθεγξατο, ο δε ειπεν, ΕΥΟΜΕΘΑ
ΣΟΙ, Ω ΖΕΥ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΕ.

Z.

hand,

hand, and said, WE WILL FOLLOW THEE, THE SUPREME GOD.

The character and conduct of this great prince of Persia, as described by Isaiah, and Æschylus, and Xenophon, and Josephus, is such as makes it probable, that he derived great advantage from his commerce with the Jews, and from the knowledge which the last of those writers assures us he had of the sacred books. This intercourse will also account for the conformity of many rites and sentiments among the ancient Persians and the Jews^a. See Hyde's *Historia Rel. vet. Pers.*

^a Zoroastri quidem (ut suis locis fufius diximus) ex conversatione cum captivis in Persiâ Judæis, benè notum fuit Vetus Testamentum et multi ex eo ritus in Persarum usum deducti sunt, uti constat tam ex ejus historiâ creationis et igne sacro in templis, et aliis rebus cum Judaismo coincidentibus, quàm ex eo quod (referente Gjanabio) multa DAVIDICA in suos libros inseruit, et prophetias edidit de Messia, in Veteri Testamento, prædicto et subobscurè revelato, &c. &c. Hydii præf. in *Hist. vet. Pers.* et vide p. 174. 268. 387. et alibi passim.

A glorious example to every prince and every commander, to worship God, and depend upon his providence and protection in every action; to oppose tyranny and oppression, to redeem a captive nation, and by wisdom, honor, justice and humanity, acquire such authority as to unite remotest nations in obedience, fidelity, and affection to them.

THE

T H E
C O N C L U S I O N.

THUS have I made it my humble endeavor to reconcile most of the prophecies of the Old Scriptures which materially regard the New, with the facts contained therein, by elucidating, to the best of my understanding, what is dark, and explaining what is difficult; and to manifest the whole to be not only a system, but even a system worthy of the sacred character impressed upon it; consequently what no believer ought to be ashamed of, or at a loss to defend against any attack on what ground soever: for which all glory and thankfulness are due to God alone, the undoubted author of it!

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